

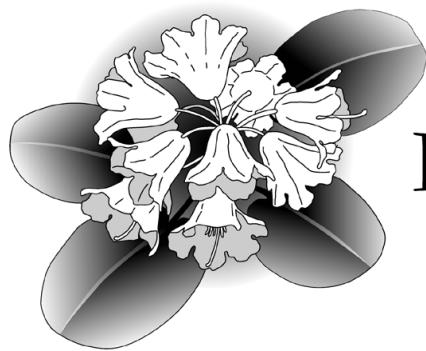
AtlanticRhodo

www.AtlanticRhodo.org

Volume 46: Number 1

February 2022





Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society

Our Mission

ARHS supports and promotes the development and exchange of expertise and material relating to the creation and maintenance of year-round garden landscapes featuring rhododendrons and other plants.

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Photos in articles are by the authors, unless otherwise identified.

Membership

Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society.

The current membership period is September 1, 2021 to August 31, 2022. The membership fee is \$30.00. For benefits and to download a membership form see ARHS website www.atlanticrhodo.org

American Rhododendron Society: ARHS is a chapter in District 12 of the American Rhododendron Society.

Combined ARHS and ARS membership cost is \$84.00 Canadian. For benefits and to download a membership form see www.atlanticrhodo.org

Cheques, made payable to Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society, should be sent to **Jane Plant, 1950 Preston St, Halifax , NS B3H 3V9. Payment may be made by e-transfer to atlanticrhodo@gmail.com**

Please include name, address with postal code, e-mail address and telephone number, for organizational purposes only.

AtlanticRhodo is the Newsletter of the Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society. We welcome your comments, suggestions, articles, photos and other material for publication. Send all material to the editor.

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Cover Photo: Breuckner Hybrid - *R. brachycarpum x R. forrestii repens* [Photo Bob Howard]



Calendar of Events

Meetings are normally held in the Nova Scotia Museum Auditorium. *Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St. Halifax, Nova Scotia Canada*

Meeting notices will include a sign-up form for those who wish to attend in person. Space will be limited due to social distancing requirements as posted by Public Health at the time. The ARHS will continue to offer our programming by Zoom for those who cannot attend in person. Details and link will be sent to members.

ARHS is following all guidelines from Public Health on public meetings and gatherings. You may need to show your proof of vaccination. All arrangements are subject to change if guidelines do not allow for public meetings.

Tuesday, March 1, 2022 at 7:30PM by Zoom

“The Hardier, Smaller Rhododendrons” Dr. Glen Jamieson, Editor, Journal of the American Rhododendron Society

Presentation will focus on the hardier, smaller rhododendrons – their taxonomy, features and cultural characteristics. With many people living on smaller properties, often in urban areas, there is now a greater interest in the smaller rhododendrons. This talk features the taxonomic and cultural characteristics of some of the hardier, smaller, mostly non-deciduous rhododendron species that should survive in many of your Maritime microclimates. Dr. Jamieson will not include hybrids, as there are too many and he is not familiar with the best options for the entire region.

Tuesday, April 5, 2022 at 7:30PM at the Nova Scotia Museum and by Zoom

Plant Sale Preview, Dennis Crouse and Plant Sale Committee

Join us for images and descriptions of a treasure trove of plants: Japanese Maples from David Veinotte, woodland plants and evergreen Azaleas from Insigne Nursery, Rhododendrons from Jack Looye’s Rhodoland Nursery, and a variety of Heaths and Heathers from a specialized BC nursery. The presentation will include instructions for ordering, payment and pick-up of plants.

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 at 7:30PM at the Nova Scotia Museum

Member-to-Member Plant Sale, Bring your surplus plants for sale to other members. Tables will be set up for your plants.

Saturday, May 7, 2022 from 10AM till noon at Donna and Duff Evers, 10 Sime Court, Kingswood Subdivision, Hammonds Plains, Pick-up for pre-ordered Plant Sale

Sunday, June 12, 2022 from 2 – 5PM Spring Garden Tour, Fall River/Oakfield

Garden locations and descriptions will be sent to members in May.

Thank you for avoiding the use of perfumes and scented products when you come to ARHS events.

Welcome

A very warm welcome to our new members who have joined ARHS since November.

Elizabeth Beale	Peggy's Cove, NS
Denzil Reid	Miles Cove, NFL
Ursula Snyder,	Dartmouth, NS
Aaron Staples	Kentville, NS
Paige Woodward	Chilliwack, BC

xxxx

President's Report

One of the best reasons to join our society is to see all the wonderful pictures of plants and gardens at our meetings during our stormy and cold winters. This January, Katherine Kerin, Garden Curator of Innisfree Garden north of New York City, showed us wonderful images of the “cup gardens” at Innisfree. She explained the philosophy of “Slow Gardening” based on the work of landscape architect Lester Collins and the ongoing maintenance of Innisfree as a public garden. On Feb 1st, Panayoti Kelaidis presented spectacular photos of the scenery and *Ericaceae* plants of Tibet, including *Cassiope*, *Meconopsis*, *Primula*, *Saussurea*, *Diapensia* and *Rhododendron*. With our acidic soils and moist conditions, he challenged us to try growing some of these wonderful plants. On March 1st, Glen Jamieson, editor of the Journal of the American Rhododendron Society, will present “The Smaller, Hardier Rhododendrons,” including images of *Rhododendron* from China.

With the Omicron wave, the Nova Scotia Museum has closed its auditorium, but we have had great participation at our meetings by Zoom, with many joining from the Atlantic Provinces and around the world. By April, we plan to be back to meeting in person for a preview of the Pre-order Plant Sale including a special selection of Heaths and Heathers from the Fraser Valley, B.C. We will continue using Zoom so that those who have too far to travel to meetings can still participate. In May, the Member-to-Member Plant Sale will be in-person only, followed by the pick-up for the pre-ordered plant sale. June will feature our Spring Garden Tour, focused on gardens in the Fall River/Oakfield area.

The Niagara Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society (ARS) has invited us to join their meetings by Zoom and we have also welcomed them to join ours. Thanks to Christina Woodward, our District 12 Representative on the ARS Board, for starting this great initiative. Christina has also worked with Juliana Medeiros from the Holden Arboretum to develop the “Next Generation” podcast series “For the Love of *Rhododendrons*.” Eight podcasts are available on the ARS website at: https://www.rhododendron.org/next_gen_podcasts.htm. The ARS 2022 Convention (see ars2022.org) will be held in Vancouver, Washington from May 4-8 and Christina and I will be attending. I will report on the Garden Tours and talks in a future issue of *AtlanticRhodo*.

I am also working on two other upcoming conferences in Nova Scotia. On July 7-8 the Atlantic Master Gardeners (see atlanticmastergardeners.ca) will be hosting the “Learning from Nature” Conference at the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus near Truro. It will feature Gerald Gloade, who provided the “Introduction to Mi’kma’ki” presentation for the ARS 2021 Convention, and Julie Moir Messervy, a landscape architect from New England who created the Toronto Music Garden with Yo-Yo Ma. From June 8-11, 2023, the Nova Scotia Rock Garden Club is planning to host the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS) Annual Conference at the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus. Many members of NARGS, including Panayoti Kelaidis and Todd Boland, are looking forward to returning to Nova Scotia to see all the Nova Scotia plants, our gardens, and their friends.

I would like to thank all the ARHS Board members and volunteers for their important work promoting rhododendrons and gardens in Nova Scotia. Sharon Bryson has distributed the seed list for our annual Seed Exchange. Please submit your orders soon. Dennis Stuebing is editing the *AtlanticRhodo* and Sterling Levy is continuing to design its layout. The Board discussed expanding from three issues to four per year as well as posting the current issues on our website. Lynn Rotin and Carol Morrison are organizing the June Garden Tour. Dennis Crouse is working with Jane Rostek and Catherine Deveau-Abbass to organize the Plant Sales. Nancy Lewis is our new Secretary and Jane Plant is now coordinating Membership. Special thanks to Rebecca Lancaster for providing technical support for our Zoom meetings, updating the website, and sending out notices to members. We are still in need for a Treasurer, so if you are interested or know of someone to recommend, please send me a message at sharpe@ns.sympatico.ca or through the ARHS website. ☺

I look forward to seeing you at future ARHS meetings and events.

Jim Sharpe

ARHS President, Program Chair, and Acting Treasurer

A Word from the Editor

Dennis Stuebing

Thank you for taking the time to explore Volume 46, Issue 1, of the AtlanticRhodo. Inside you'll find a number of interesting articles as well as general information about the Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society (ARHS). This issue includes:

- Rebecca Lancaster's update on annual memberships and the composition of the Board of Directors
- Announcements on recent awards, namely the American Rhododendron Society's (ARS) Bronze Medal and the Nova Scotia Community College's (NSCC) 2021-22 Passionate Plants Person Award
- Jim Sharpe's President's Report as well as an overview of upcoming events
- Information about the 2022 ARHS Plant Sales and Seed Exchange by Dennis Crouse and Sharon Bryson, respectively
- Chris Hopgood's summary of the Outreach Program
- Kate Kerin's presentation on the Innisfree Garden prepared by Jim Sharpe
- Jamie Ellison's article on "Gardening with Ericaceae" illustrated with a number of beautiful photos, and
- The first of two articles that I have prepared on "What's New in 2022" based on interviews with representatives of nurseries in Nova Scotia

Thank you to all of our contributors! Additional thanks to Sterling Levy, for the ongoing layout and design support that makes AtlanticRhodo so visually appealing.

As this is the first issue in my role as Editor, I would like to take the opportunity to express my personal gratitude to past Editors, including most notably, Jean Henshall, for her recent efforts. Thanks for providing an excellent standard to which I can aspire and for the assistance in preparing me for the role.

This year we will aim to increase the number of issues from three to four, with the new addition in late summer. We are also considering, and seek your input, on whether to include advertising within the AtlanticRhodo. By offering a limited amount of promotional space to nurseries and/or other garden-related businesses, we can open a new stream of revenue to support ARHS programming and other operational needs. If you would like to share your views on the idea of including advertising in the AtlanticRhodo, please contact me at: dennis.stuebing@hotmail.com

Finally, please contact me if you are interested in contributing to a future issue of the AtlanticRhodo by writing an article or developing other content. Input and ideas from new or seasoned writers is always welcome. ☺

2022 PLANT SALES

Dennis Crouse

MEMBER-TO-MEMBER PLANT SALE

Members are invited to participate on **Tuesday, May 3rd from 7:30pm to 8:30pm**.

We are hopeful that we will be able to hold this sale at the Museum of Natural History in Halifax depending if the venue is available and the status of Nova Scotia Health requirements for gatherings. We will adapt to make it safe and pleasant. Please read forthcoming emails from the ARHS for updates including confirmation of venue and volunteer opportunities.

ARHS SPRING 2022 PRE-ORDER PLANT SALE (FOR MEMBERS)

Saturday May 7th

Once I have a list of plants from our vendors, members can expect the information from the ARHS via email. I am hopeful this will happen by mid-February. Members are invited to pick-up their ordered plants on Saturday, May 7th from 10am to 1pm at 5 Sime Court, Hammonds Plains (home of Donna & Duff Evers). Thank you Donna for volunteering your space for the sale.

Here is what you can look forward to: The suppliers that have committed this year include Old Rio Nursery, Insigne Gardens and Jack Looye. We have an opportunity to bring in an interesting variety of heaths and heathers. Stay tuned....I advise you to please read your emails from the ARHS that would include the package for this particular plant sale and volunteer opportunities. ☺

Welcome to our new Membership Convenor!

The Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society (ARHS) would like to welcome our new Membership Convenor, Jane Plant. Jane has been an ARHS member for many years. For any membership inquiries, Jane can be reached at arhsmembership@gmail.com

ARHS memberships end on August 31 of each year. You will receive a reminder over the summer to renew your membership as of September 1. Membership benefits include the ARHS journal three times a year as well as access to the ARHS Seed Exchange, Member-to-Member Sale, garden tours and the ARHS Plant Sale.

We host monthly meetings starting each September until the spring. Our meetings are usually held at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History at 1747 Summer Street in Halifax. Due to the pandemic, our monthly presentations have been held virtually by Zoom.

We presently have over a hundred active ARHS members. There are also fifty-one American Rhododendron Society members in the Rhododendron Society of Canada (RSC) Atlantic Region. We have many members in our ARHS database who are not presently active this year. We encourage all members to **renew their ARHS membership each year** as the membership fees cover our events, presentations and plant sale costs. Membership fees can be paid by cheque (send to: Jane Plant, ARHS Membership Convenor, 1950 Preston St, Halifax, B3H 3V9) or by e-transfer to atlanticrhodo@gmail.com.

Many thanks to Rebecca Lancaster, who remains on the ARHS Executive as Vice President! ☺

ARHS Outreach Report 2021

Christopher Hopgood

This past year was one of very good accomplishments and some disappointments.

The achievement this year was a very successful work party morning at Regatta Point, the John Meagher Garden, on May 2, 2021. Four members, Eileen Pease, Mary Stevenson, Jim Bruce and myself, Chris Hopgood, spent 3 hours of successful effort. The pruning was very much needed and a great job was done. This garden, established by a long time member, John Meagher, has been a beacon of beauty at Regatta Point. Every time we are there the neighbours thank us for our good work. The rhodos and azaleas are about 30-40 years old, and this year we replaced a few that had succumbed. There is more work to be done, so keep an eye open for the invite to help out in 2022. Also, a shout-out to Eileen Pease for taking excellent photos that can be seen in the November 2021 ARHS Newsletter.

On the disappointing aspect, in reviewing our work over the years at Stratford Way Park in Clayton Park/West Bedford area, there are two things that are concerning. First, non-native trees have seeded themselves in the rhodo garden. They are invasive and grow really fast. There are about four or five of them in the garden now, some more than 10 feet tall. The trees are black locust. My efforts at finding the HRM person responsible for that garden did not provide any results, so I will work on that in the coming months. These trees have to be removed. You should see the thorns on these things! Wow!

The other disappointment is that the rhodos and azaleas are in a very tough environment. The ground is not moist; it is dry in the summer and in the winter as well. It is subject to difficult winters as the local microclimate is quite harsh. Cold winters, lots of wind, and dry in the summer. Also, the deer have found the garden, and every azalea is bare of its blossoms come springtime. They have not attacked the rhodos yet, because they are barely surviving. The only real success has been the evergreens we planted along the periphery of the park a few years ago, especially the white pines, they seem to do well there. We had planted these so that there might be a chance that the microclimate could be improved with the evergreen windbreaks. There is still a chance of this, with the planting of rhododendrons in amongst the pines, but with the deer being present, it's going to be difficult. After I confer with the HRM staff member responsible, I will be able to report back with a recommendation to the board regarding the Stratford Way rhododendron and azalea garden.

Over the years the ARHS Outreach Program has been a worthwhile endeavor for the ARHS. After hurricane Juan, we assisted with mending the damage at the Halifax Public Gardens, bringing in new plants in an area that needed them. Our work at the Meagher Garden at Regatta Point has been well appreciated, thus the ARHS can be justifiably proud of the work that has been done over the years. ☺

Passionate Plants Person Award

The Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society (ARHS) donates annually to the Passionate Plants Person Award at the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) and Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture. Cassey M. was selected as the 2021-22 NSCC recipient. The original Profile and Award Announcement can be found at: <https://spark.adobe.com/page/Lmprm64z43ihT/> It has been republished with permission from NSCC.

Cassey M.

Horticulture and Landscape Technology, Kingsstec Campus
Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC)

This award will allow me to find a balance between part-time employment and managing my health over during the 2021-22 school year. Due to my chronic conditions, it has been challenging to maintain both full-time employment and my health. Over the 2021 summer, I was not able to work as much as I thought I would due to the 3rd wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and an increase in symptoms of my chronic illnesses. My health expenses are significant, and the time I need to spend on recovery and healing is significant. Because of bursaries like this one, I am able to find that balance and still be the passionate plant person I am."

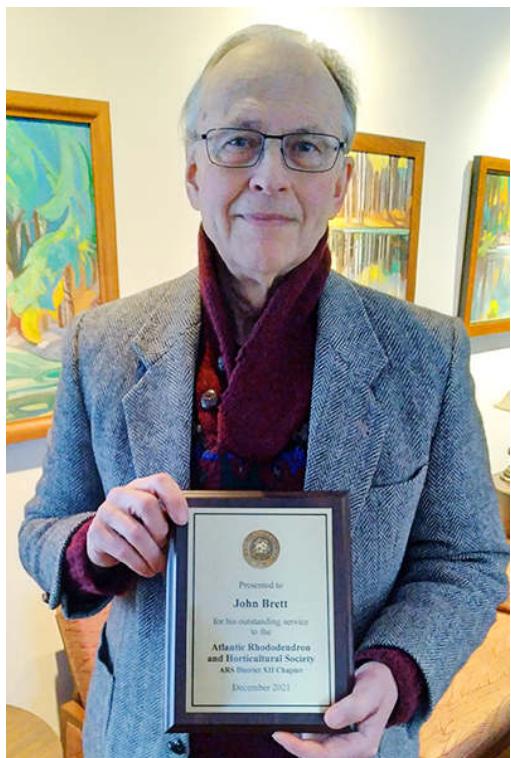
In 2018-2019, I took time away from my work in the mental health field to focus on my own health and managing my wellness. During this time, I found myself frequently in gardens. Both my own and a community garden that I volunteered at. At the community garden, I witnessed community members increase their access (and consumption) of healthy foods and develop pride in their new skill development. I too had this pride, which was demonstrated by my excitement in talking about anything 'plants'. It was hard to get me to talk about anything that wasn't plant-related. Prior to attending NSCC, I joined my local NSAGC group, the Dartmouth Horticultural Society. I love the community that horticultural societies foster, and the knowledge I was gaining through the diversity of monthly speakers. Even in the challenge of the pandemic and much of our club being 55+ and not tech-savvy, we found ways to teach each other the necessary tech skills to stay in touch and continue learning and growing together. I wanted to learn whatever I could about the plants around me. I increased my houseplant collection and continued to increase the plant diversity in my backyard. My plant children increased at a rapid rate and I learned the best way to continue my independent learning was to keep a plant journal in an effort to remember what I had learned once before.

To succeed in the industry and gain an income where I might be able to support myself, I knew I would need to go back to school. I am a mature student and it has been 13 years since my undergraduate degrees. I knew I would have some challenges within my learning curve and developing strong study skills. A recent concussion and other chronic health conditions led me to believe that re-training would be near impossible, especially given many of the strategies that worked for me during my undergrad I found no longer effective. I chose NSCC as I know it to be an inclusive and supportive educational institution. I knew I would be supported as I continue to learn how to manage my chronic conditions as well as my newer post-concussive symptoms. Despite an ongoing pandemic, NSCC was able to find a way to allow for hands-on learning. I was able to secure supports from accessibility services, and my instructors were supportive and adaptable. I recognize that I will likely need to continue my education beyond my two years at NSCC, but my experiences over the last year and the year to come will give me the confidence, skills, and knowledge to enter a new (and growing) industry and to navigate a path that allows me to build upon my strengths passions and capabilities.

I am incredibly grateful for this award. Finding a balance between exploring my passions and maintaining my wellness is integral to long-term success. Receiving this award increases my confidence and motivates me to continue to push through when I hit bumps in the road. Retraining later in life is nerve-racking. Focusing on my passions is more than just a distraction, it is increasing my skills, knowledge, and ability to continue to give back to the communities I belong to. From a young age, I have been a community-minded person, even winning national awards like the Queens Golden Jubilee Medal for my involvement in my community. I have spent the last 20 years of my life in one way or another that supports vulnerable communities and improves their quality of life. I know I will ultimately find a way to share my passion for plants with others and improve my community in the process. I have yet to determine the best way to do this, but with your support, and the support of my instructors I will discover ways to continue to make an impact and reach my goals. Thank you." ☺

2021 ARS Bronze Medal Recipient: John Brett

Presented by Jim Sharpe at the December 7th ARHS meeting.



It is my pleasure to present the ARS Bronze Medal to John Brett for his outstanding service to the Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticulture Society.

John Brett was our President for over four years from November 2016 until last year. In addition to the responsibilities of President, John edited our newsletter, *AtlanticRhodo*, and was very successful working with authors, republishing interesting articles, and obtaining excellent photographs of our Atlantic gardens. He also served as ARS District Twelve Representative and was instrumental in bringing the 2021 ARS Convention to Nova Scotia last June.

John is a passionate rhododendron grower and enthusiast. The results of his nurturing rhodos from seeds, crosses, and cuttings, can be seen at his home on Halls Road, at the adjacent Dick Steele Garden, and at his home on Morris Island in Yarmouth County. He was instrumental in taking over 1000 cuttings to root for last year's plant sale for the ARS Convention and has continued his work to promote rhododendron propagation in Atlantic Canada.

John, thank you for all your important work in promoting the species Rhododendron in Atlantic Canada. ☺



Dick Steele hybrid *R. yakushimanum* x 'Purple Splendor' [Photo John Brett.]

What's New in 2022: What to Expect at some of Nova Scotia's Nurseries this Spring

Dennis L. Stuebing

February can be an important and busy time for gardeners. Non-gardeners may look out at the drifts of snow and long for warmer temperatures while gardeners take advantage of these moments to envision the changes they want to make to what lies beneath. I have prepared this article to help our readers to plan for the year ahead by providing information on what can be expected in some of the local nurseries. This is the first of two articles; the second will be included in the next Issue of AtlanticRhodo.

I contacted two of the many nurseries in Nova Scotia and asked if they would participate in a short phone interview. A summary of the responses provided, are included below. Each representative was asked the same four questions:

- What are the top 5 new plants (shrubs, trees, perennials, annuals) you are most excited about for the upcoming season?
- What are the top 3 ‘tried-and-true’ plants you recommend everyone should have in their gardens?
- What 3 plants do you recommend for gardeners concerned with climate change?
- Given our audience, what is your favourite or the most popular *Rhododendron* at your nursery?

In response to the first question, Susan Lawrence stated that she is most excited about **Baldwin Nursery**'s selection of:

- *Magnolias* - all of which are hardy for Nova Scotia
- More than nine varieties of dogwoods including Satomi, Venus, Scarlet Fire, Rosy Teacups and Blue Ray
- Bloodgood Japanese Maple - An exciting, hardy, ornamental that can provide some shade and lots of all-season interest
- Native Nova Scotian plants that can be difficult to obtain elsewhere including Acadian forest tree species. Their native species include but aren't limited to Labrador tea, *Aronia*, Rhodora, native ferns, and bayberry
- Unusual trees like Carolina Silverbell, Paperbark Maple, and London Planetree. Everyone has a Burning Bush but for an interesting alternative consider Huckleberry.

By way of the ‘tried-and-true’, Susan recommended:

- *Daphnes* like the Acadian Daphne. They are nice, but gardeners should consider the toxicity of some varieties
- If you have the room and woodland conditions a Rhodora is recommended
- Marsh Marigold for its beautiful yellow flowers
- Swamp milkweed (or other types of milkweed) as Nova Scotia is a way station for the monarch butterfly.
Baldwin's actively document the monarchs that visit the nursery

In consideration of climate change, Susan suggested that gardeners consider:

- Native White Pine - as they put more oxygen into the air than other conifers (even more than White Spruce)
- Sugar Maple - because one of the concerns related to climate change is increasing temperatures and the shade Sugar Maples can provide in our yards will provide us and other species with refuge
- *Echinacea*, Brown-eyed Susan, Shasta Daisy, Lavender and Pasque Flower as each attracts pollinators and provides food where other sources may become more limited as a result of climate change

It is often difficult to choose only one, but Susan's favourite *Rhododendron* is ‘Vulcan Flame’. It is not that popular, yet, but produces true red flowers, which are very hardy and reliable. It sometimes even re-blooms. ‘Percy Wiseman’ is very popular because it's a great dwarf variety and Capistrano is also another great and popular option that can be found at Baldwin Nursery.

2022 is Baldwin Nursery's 27th year of operations. This year it is focussed on propagation for its own sales rather than other businesses. Lots of vegetable and herb transplants will be available again in May with new and heirloom varieties on offer. Compost, mulch and seaweed fertilizer can all be sourced from Baldwin Nursery. For more information visit the Baldwin website at: <https://www.baldwinnurseries.ca/>

Jackie Bezanson from **Blomidon Nurseries** is excited about:

- The vast array of *Hydrangeas* – “Twist and Shout” is not necessarily new but it’s Jackie’s favourite. It is a lace-cap variety. She is also excited about Proven Winner’s “Let’s Dance Can Do!”. Both are acidic soil lovers and can yield the deep blue flowers particularly with the conditions on the South Shore
- *Aronia melanocarpa* “Low Scape” which is a hybrid of a native plant that can reach up to 8ft x 8ft. This one is a low mounding shrub with white flowers in spring followed by purple berries. It has shiny green leaves that turn scarlet in fall. It’s great on the edge of a shrub border reminiscent of *Cotoneaster*
- *Heptacodium miconioides* – or Seven Sons Flower – doesn’t get the attention it deserves. It has exfoliating bark and late-season white flowers that give way to red seed heads wrapped in papery husk. It is structurally similar to Flowing Dogwood. Bees love it and it can be trained into a tree form or left as a multi-stemmed shrub
- *Magnolia* “Genie” – this is a hard to find variety and is unusual because it’s flowers are shaped like a water lily and dark burgundy in colour
- Combo-potted *Clematis* – there are two varieties in the same pot many with contrasting colours that bloom at the same time. Blomidon will carry four or five combinations

In response to the question about “tried-and-true” options, Jackie recommends:

- Plants that feel tropical like big, leafy plants such as Castor Oil Bean Plant, *Cannas*, or *Calocasia* (Elephant Ears). And every garden, even those that are limited to pots, should have some kind of fruiting plant like strawberries or blueberries
- *Petunias* – you cannot beat them for the mass of colour they provide with little care. They are a forgiving plant that last all summer long and will bounce back from a dry spell after watering
- Planting for four seasons of interest – evergreens are a great option and you can usually find one for any spot, dwarf or giant, but everyone should have one, including Jackie’s favourite, *Chamaecyparis*, which range from less than 60cms to large, tall, narrow and irregular shapes

Gardeners adapting to climate change need to consider their local conditions. For super sandy sites, Jackie suggested:

- *Yuccas*, *Sedums* and *Sempervivum* which are also great as xeriscape options
- In addition, and with hotter summers, using more drought-tolerant plants such as *Iris germanica* as well as ornamental thyme, and certain types of *Echinacea* would work well. “Cheyenne Spirit” is vigorous and surprising contender as you don’t know what you’re getting since the flowers can be yellow, orange, or red or a mix thereof

Jackie’s favourite *Rhododendron* has always been “Nova Zembla”. It’s been around for eons and has dark fuchsia pink flowers. Unlike other rhodos it has very dark, deeply veined and slightly rippled leaves. It stays more compact than many others at around five to six feet tall. Blomidon Nursery carries it every year.

As a result of the flooding in British Columbia last year, there will be a short supply of roses and fruit trees. It is likely that the impact will be felt for multiple years. Gardeners will need to be ready to purchase as soon as they see plants or items at nurseries due to limited supply across the sector. Gardening for food security will be a recurring theme this year with blueberries, fruit trees, and hardy figs already in demand. She recommends including fruit-bearing plants into gardens and yards by considering hedges of blueberries instead of non-fruiting shrubs. There are lots of interesting varieties like “Peach Sorbet” with its spectacular foliage or “Perpetua” that successively produces all season. For more information visit the Blomidon Nurseries website at: <https://blomidonnurseries.com/>

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Susan Lawrence from Baldwin Nursery and Jackie Bezanson from Blomidon Nurseries for their contribution to this article. ☘

Gardening with Ericaceous Plants: Plants of the “Sour” Soil

Jamie Ellison

“Sour” soil was an interesting term I heard from the old farmers growing up in my youth in western Cape Breton. It soon became relevant when I started growing vegetable gardens and watching my father splitting open bags of lime with a spade and the clouds of dust that followed, as he spread it over the gardens. Gardens can take on many forms and styles with endless varieties of plants and garden themes to choose from, so where does one begin? An analysis and understanding of your existing soil, light conditions, microclimates and observing your landscape in all four seasons is a great approach. In most of the Northeast including Atlantic Canada, soils and habitats are influenced by the weathering of parent material or bedrock, which is comprised mainly of igneous rocks like granites, resulting in soils with a low pH. This, accompanied with maritime precipitation and undulating topography keep soils in Atlantic Canada, for the most part, acidic. Soil pH is a measurement of the alkalinity or acidity of soil determined on a scale of 1-14, with 7 as the neutral mark. Soils below 7 are considered acidic and above 7, alkaline. Soils in most of Atlantic Canada have a pH ranging from 4.5-6.8 with a few locales having soils neutral to alkaline. In Nova Scotia, our native forest lies within the Acadian Forest region, which is a transitional forest between the Boreal Forest to the north and the Temperate Forest to the south. Habitats are varied ranging from coastal headlands, marshes, and sphagnum bogs to mixed woodlands. Populations of low pH tolerant plant species inhabit these sites and form over-story and understory colonies. In more adverse soil conditions, ericaceous plants dominate a variety of habitats forming extensive ground covers called heathlands, consisting of many intermingling species. So why not a garden and gardening style that takes advantage of acid-soil conditions and complements our magnificent native flora?

The Family Ericaceae

The Family Ericaceae (*Heath family*), was first described by Antoine Laurent de Jussieu in 1789. The name comes from the genus *Erica*, derived from Greek, loosely described as “Heather”. The plant family, Ericaceae, now consists of more than 124 genera and over 4000 species. Ericaceous plants are generally woody plants that vary in size from low ground covers to small trees. These plants have a shallow-spreading root mass found marginally below the soil surface mainly comprised of fine, fibrous strands, lacking root hairs. This is an evolutionary advantage as the root system can absorb moisture and dissolved nutrients rapidly through the volume of delicate roots. Most Ericaceous plants are known as ‘*Calcifuges*’ or plants not suitable for alkaline soils, favoring organically rich, nutrient poor acidic soils. Plants depend on mutualistic relationships with species of specific *Ericoid mycorrhizae* (beneficial fungi) to adequately obtain nutrients and water from the surrounding soil. Low pH soils can be a restricting factor for successful growth in many plants, limiting the accessibility of certain plant essential nutrients and rendering other elements toxic. Very low pH soils affect the soil ecosystem by limiting soil microbial biodiversity and by constraining the cycling of plant essential nutrients. Many of our garden plants need near neutral or alkaline and fertile soils to perform best, which is usually accomplished by soil modifications, nutritional supplements and regular additions of dolomitic lime if the pH is exceptionally low. One of the great advantages of gardening with ericaceous plants is that most of our soils have suitable *Ericoid mycorrhizae* and pH levels necessary for growing these plants without extensive soil revisions. Native Ericaceae are successful colonizers of difficult, low pH environments like bogs and heathlands and with the assistance of *Ericoid mycorrhizae*, they have adapted to these adverse soil types surviving on minimal nutrient inputs; hence they are not large consumers of fertilizers. The shallow, thick, root masses allow for relatively easy transplanting with most genera. The drawback from these fine roots is twofold. Pot bound plants need a rigorous root pruning to encourage the thick root mass to move out of the root ball and into the surrounding soil. Secondly, plants require ample and consistent moisture during the growing season and benefit from an organic mulch, particularly when newly planted material is establishing.



Ericaceous Barrens, Blue Rocks, N.S.



Ericaceous Border, MUN Botanical Garden , NL.

Genera like *Rhododendron*, *Kalmia* and *Gaultheria* have representative species native to the region, so it would make sense that some exotic members from these genera may also do reasonably well and for the most part they do, providing the site is conducive to culturing the group. Heavy, wet, poor draining soils are not desirable for growing these plants nor are very dry sites. However, there are some selections and native species like *Arctostaphylos*, *Vaccinium*, *Kalmia*, *Empetrum*, *Corema* and *Gaylussacia* that can tolerate these extreme conditions. Most of the group appreciate moderate, maritime climates and thrive in soils that retain moisture but drain freely.

Thoughts on Design

With so many genera, species, and selections to choose from, ericaceous plants lend themselves to many garden styles and themes. Selections can be shade or sun tolerant, deciduous, broadleaf evergreens, trees, shrubs and groundcovers with a myriad of choices and enough diversity to fill most garden niches. Throughout Atlantic Canada there are some fine examples of ericaceous gardens. Most of these gardens have one thing in common: they use a variety of ericaceous plants blending textures, foliage and floral displays effectively, while creating beautiful seasonal landscapes. Some of these gardens complement existing Acadian Forest habitats utilizing native Ericaceae, understory and over-story plants while minimizing habitat disturbance.

Floral displays on many of the exotic selections are brief but create a tremendous impact if sequenced with appropriate choices. Floral ranges and colour combinations from the genus *Rhododendron* are endless, with bloom times spanning from the end of April to mid-July in some years in this region. By planting different varieties together, one can overlap, blend and sequence bloom throughout the gardening season. In general, with the right selections of ericaceous plants, flowering can appear from late winter to November in many parts of Atlantic Canada in most years.

A great number of Ericaceae suitable for culture have broadleaf evergreen qualities. These are effective four-season garden plants, many with particularly attractive foliage displays. Numerous species and selections of *Rhododendron* are cloaked in attractive silver and or brown tomentum, which are arguably as beautiful when the new growth flushes as they are in flower. Plants from *Calluna*, *Erica*, *Leucothoe* and some *Rhododendrons* have attractive foliage that can change colour throughout the season, displaying hues of yellow, burgundy, silver and gold. Numerous deciduous Ericaceae have spectacular fall foliage displays rivaling some of the best garden centre ornamentals. Native species, notably from deciduous *Vaccinium* and *Gaylussacia* species have outstanding autumn colours and the bonus of edible fruit.

Garden Reflections

My garden on Pereau Road has a strong ericaceous theme throughout with conditions ranging from hot and dry, to shade, full sun, and bog areas. There is representation of Ericaceae in all these sites, demonstrating the tenacity and range of the family. In addition to the “exotics” are native Ericaceae, which contribute valuable ornamental qualities and provide environmental services as desirable species for native insects pollinators. Some are landscape “problem solvers” growing readily in some of the more difficult sites on the property.

Ericaceae, in general are relatively trouble-free and many are long-lived in the landscape. While selections from *Rhododendron* and *Kalmia* have impressive floral displays, they tend not to overstay their welcome, returning to a subtle stature, blending into the background after their exotic presentations subside.

Lastly, many ericaceous plants lend themselves to a variety of garden genres from alpine and woodland gardens to mixed borders. Some selections of *Rhododendron* and Highbush Blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) are effectively used as hedge plants in more formal garden settings while Lowbush Blueberries (*V. angustifolium*) and Bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) are valuable groundcovers on difficult sites in less formal situations. It is the variety and versatility of this group that one can take advantage of when planning a garden in this region. So, look at your own garden and see if ericaceous additions will fit into your garden style, maybe solve a landscape problem, or perhaps provide a tasty snack for the gardener or native pollinator species. ☺



Heaths & Heathers, Bayport Plant Farm, Circa 1980's.

2022 ARHS Seed Exchange

Sharon Bryson, Seed Exchange Chair

The 2022 ARHS Seed Exchange is now open. The deadline for submitting members-only orders is Feb. 28, 2022.

The electronic approach to the Seed Exchange seems to work very well. The seed list and order form will go out to all those with email addresses as in previous years. Please remember that the seeds go out on a “first-come, first-served” basis dependent on seed quantity. Get your orders in early and you have a very good chance of getting everything on your list. It is VERY helpful to list second choices on the order form. If none are listed, I do make a small “editorial decision”!

The Seed List and the Order form is available at our website: http://atlanticrhodo.org/archives/plant_sales/2022-arhs-seed-exchange/ It is also available online at The Willow Garden website with a full complement of links to many images and information to help in your decision-making. The online version will have periodic updates on availability, so that version is best to check as time goes on. The list seemed to grow this year! Thanks again to those dedicated souls who donated seeds.

Feel free to contact me if you have questions at: sbryson@ns.sympatico.ca

Electronic payment options will again be allowed for this year’s Exchange. This would be either an e-transfer or via PayPal. This is especially helpful for those ordering from outside of Canada. I will also entertain email orders for those outside of Canada and those in Western Canada. The email address to use for both is sbryson@ns.sympatico.ca Sending a cheque or money order is still an option. I would also like to have the actual order form sent to me, otherwise I have a lot of printing to do! A hard copy of the order does facilitate the process.

The Seed Exchange had a modest price increase last year, which did not seem to adversely affect ordering. Strong support of the Seed Exchange will help a bit to offset other income limitations for the Society.

The charge for shipping will remain at \$3.50. Postal charges seem to increase, but the fee almost covers that expense.

Our thanks go out to the faithful contributors who have made this Exchange possible. The overall success of our Seed Exchange depends upon seed contributions by our members, so please make a “mental note” to save some interesting seeds for next year’s Exchange. There is always an interest in the Companion Plant section as well as the Azalea and Rhododendron sections. Success also depends upon members purchasing seed. Many interesting plants can be added to our gardens by simply growing a few seeds.

Our 2022 list is quite extensive, thanks in part to contributions from some new donors and the generous repeat donations from others. The Companion Plant section this year has a very large addition of Magnolia seed from John Weagle. The selection of Azalea seed will include a relisting of several of the seed lots offered by Sally & John Perkins and Steve Cunliffe from New Hampshire. There were sufficient quantities to warrant a reoffering. This is your opportunity to acquire some interesting azalea forms. There are many interesting species Rhododendrons, offering the chance to grow species that would not normally be available. They might also require some degree of “homework”. The assortment of hand pollinated rhododendron hybrids is extensive and interesting. The keen hybridizers have been busy as “bees”.

Our 2022 list has several seed lots “recycled” from the 2021 list. The viability of azalea and rhododendron seed is usually quite good, so offering year old seed shouldn’t be a problem for growers. It is always a shame to see “leftover seed” not being used in some useful way. I will hopefully find a way to offer some other seed lots from 2021 for growers.

Several seed lots will have been given their prerequisite cool treatment. A reminder that most moist packed seed cannot be sent until temperatures moderate towards spring.

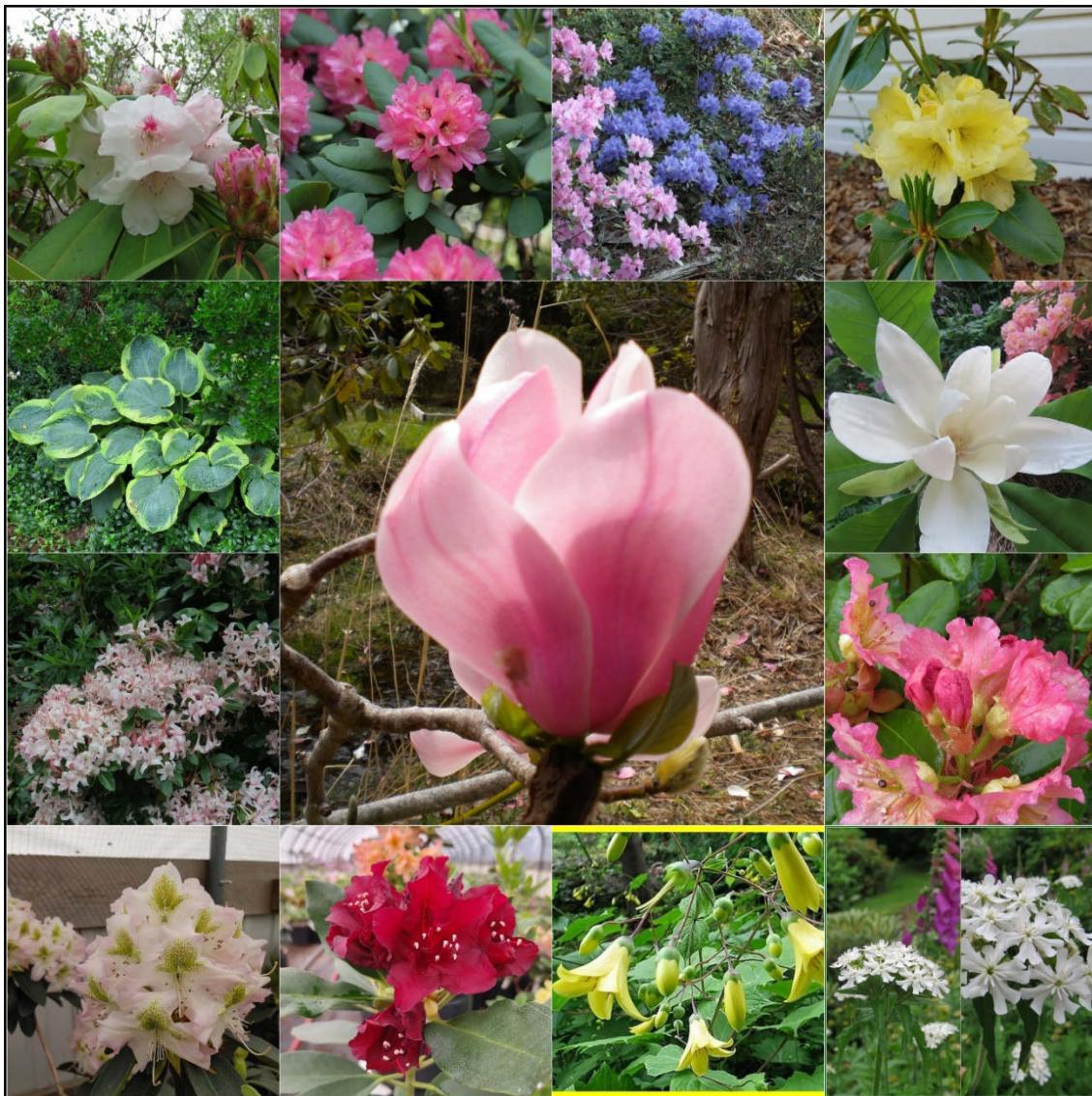
In an effort to encourage people to try growing Rhododendrons and Azaleas from seed we are offering a FREE package of seed to anyone interested, whether or not you order any other seeds. You may choose between a package of Rhododendron seed (kindly contributed by Bob Pettipas) or the usual Azalea mix. These will be noted in the seed list. Please send the order form and \$3.50 to cover postage in the usual way. If you need further planting instructions, please ask.

The Seed Exchange will be open to “the world at large” after our Feb. 28 members-only deadline and continue until April 30, 2022. Members can, of course, order at any time up to the April 30 deadline. Feel free to share the list with other

gardeners who might not be members of the ARHS. Local garden clubs might find the offerings of interest. We have had orders from many places in the world over the last few years.

Stories of your past successes and/or failures with seed growing are most interesting and welcome. Comments or suggestions regarding the Seed Exchange are also encouraged. You can send a note with your order or email sbryson@ns.sympatico.ca ☺

a few seed parent images



INNISFREE GARDEN:A STUDY IN SLOW GARDENING

Jim Sharpe

On Tuesday, January 4, 2022, Katherine (Kate) Kerin, Garden Curator at Innisfree Garden in Millbrook New York, presented a Zoom lecture to our members on the garden philosophy of “Slow Gardening.” Innisfree is a garden named after the Yeat’s poem “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” which starts “I will arise and go now...” It is located about 80 miles north of New York City occupying over 180 acres surrounding the a glacially formed Tyrell Lake.

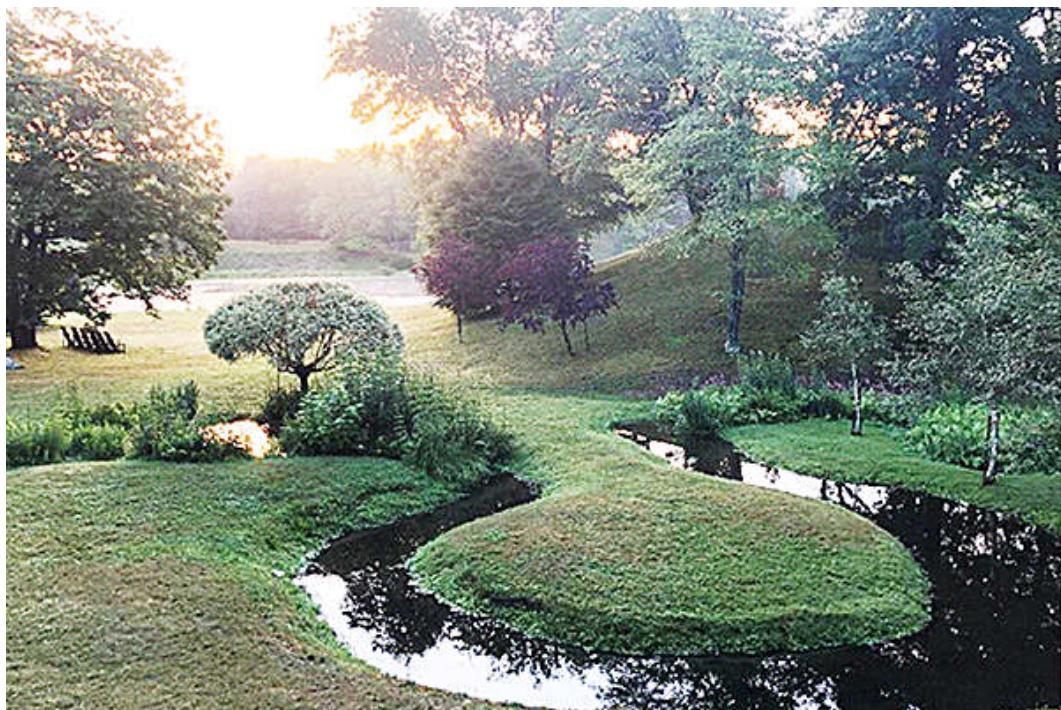
Started in the 1930s by painter Walter Beck and his wife Marion, it was inspired by an 8th century Chinese poet, painter, and gardener Wang Wei’s scroll painting of Wangchuan Villa. The Becks developed the idea of “cup gardens” to define the garden space and the stroll through them. They were greatly influenced by Lester Collins who started working with the Becks in the 1940s and continued throughout his career, including while he was Dean of Landscape Architecture at Harvard. On Walter Beck’s death in 1954, Marion asked Collins to help set up a non-profit foundation for the “study of garden art.” The foundation was developed by Collin’s wife and family after Lester’s death in 1993 to maintain the gardens.



Innisfree is like no other garden- as with origami, it unfolds, surprises, and delights.

Charles Birnbaum, Founder & CEO, The Cultural Landscape Foundation (2017)

Built around Tyrell Lake, it is a natural stroll garden, with successive views, experiences and surprises. Starting with an overlook of the lake, the path goes along the lake until a steep hill requires a climb up a stairway to see the oxbow in the stream. The stream is fed by a meadow with many stepping-stones and natural bridges. Coming down, the road approaches the terraces, where surprising mist fountains complement the stonework, plantings and rock walls.



The landscape reflects Lester Collins design philosophy of minimalism, modernism, and romanticism. Kate advised that Lester completed his undergraduate thesis at Harvard on emotion in the picturesque and romantic landscapes. In the tradition of the Hudson School of Painting, he wanted us to feel through our bodies by immersion in the landscape. Landscapes are social places. Innisfree generates emotions in us all, from five year olds to jaded older landscape architects.

Tim Richardson, author of the 2009 book “Great Gardens of America” writes about Innisfree’s contribution to landscape design:

The genius of this place lies not so much in the ideas which the designers formulated for the cup gardens, many of which are disarmingly simple, but in the way they have been maintained over the years. Essentially, everything is allowed to settle into the prevailing spirit of the place; if it does not, it is removed. It is this sensitivity, care and attention to the qualities of landscape, natural and made that make Innisfree such a memorable success.

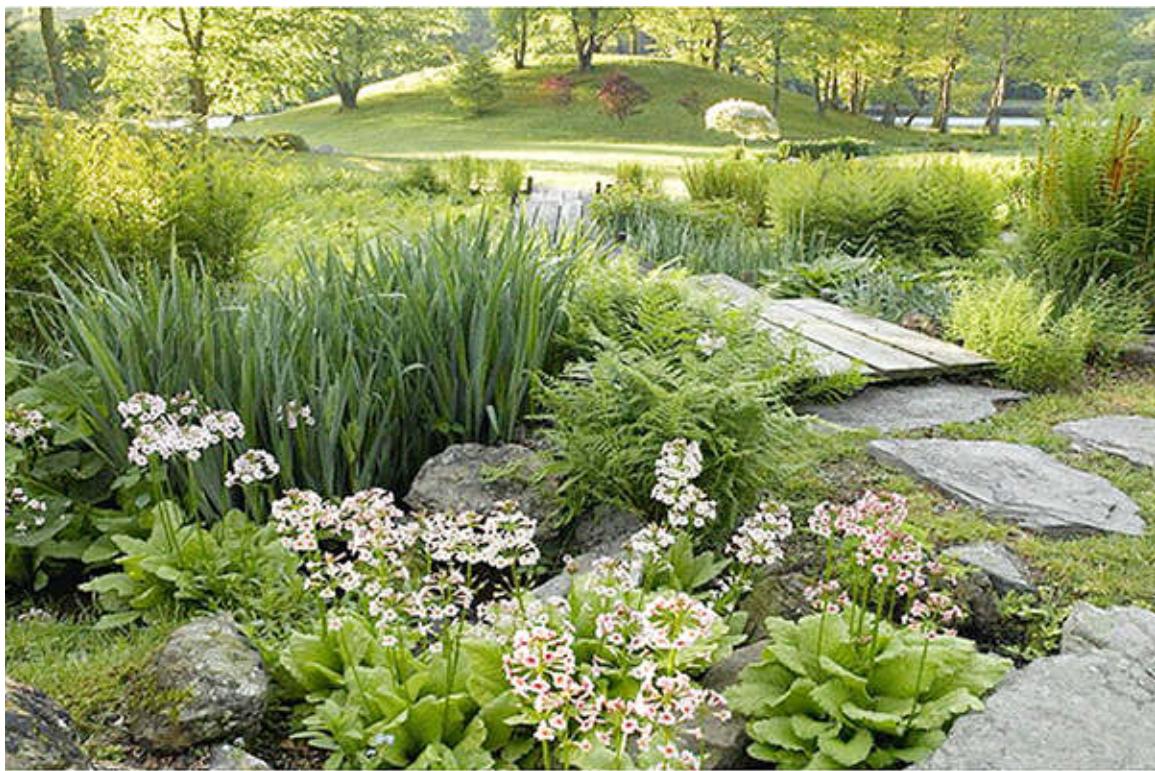
Lester Collins used what was present, which included a large number of glacial erratics, collected throughout the property. A focal point of the garden is The Point, where three of them are sited like modernist sculpture: the tortoise, the dragon and the owl.

The point: tortoise, dragon and owl rocks



Kate described the elements of “Slow Gardening” based on Collins’ design principles. She quoted Thomas Rainier, who in his 2015 book, “Planting in a Post Wild World” stated, “plant communities are the future of horticulture”. These communities of perennials and self-sowing annuals are more healthy, resilient, and less maintenance. By following natural succession, carefully editing plantings to maintain balance and interest and careful selection of cultivars and hybridization, it is possible to establish sustainable landscapes.

One area she described was the bog garden, full of ferns, skunk cabbage, and Japanese primulas, many of which have hybridized and naturalized to the site. It is mowed once a year by weed whackers and then the cuttings gathered by rake.



Kate described another cup garden created by a mist fountain on the side of a hill .



The herbaceous perennial in the middle of this garden is *Petasities japonicus*, or Giant Butterbur, a common weed which can be quite a thug and an invasive plant. However in this setting, a dry hillside, the plant will only expand as far as the water from the fountain reaches, limiting its invasive character. The cup garden is completed by stones and a lip waterfall. Very little maintenance is required.

The walk around the lake is like a walk in the woods, but with wonderful views of the natural garden.



In order to maintain the water quality in the lake, Collins devised a circulation system where the nutrient-rich water is pumped up to a reservoir, then returns to the lake filtered through a stream and meadow. This both provides nutrients to the plants and helps keep the lake free from algae blooms. The lake has a great variety of wildlife, including bass and snapping turtles.

At the end of the stroll, the path goes through a planting of columnar maples, *Acer saccharum* subsp. *Nigrum* ‘Monumentale’, in a meadow opening by the lake.



At the end of the presentation, Kate answered questions about the horticultural practices of slow gardening, including careful design, editing, controlling invasive plants, and rotational pruning. She announced a Zoom lecture series that Innisfree Garden is offering from February to April on Wednesday afternoons including the following:

February 2: Between Wild and Cultivated: The Marginal Garden and its Care by Noel Kingsbury

February 23: Effective Solutions for Dealing with Deer by Brad Roeller

March 2: A New Way of Thinking about Gardens, Nature, and Ourselves by James Golden

March 23: Painting the Romantic Landscape: Claude Lorrain to the Hudson River School by John McGiff

April 6: Landscape, Poetry & Ecology: Romanticism at Innisfree Garden by Paul Kane

April 20: Romanticism at Innisfree by Kate Kerin

Further information and registration available through the Innisfree Gardens website at www.innisfreegarden.org.

In conclusion it was wonderful to view the striking photos of Innisfree Garden and learn about the design philosophy of ‘Slow Gardening,’ from our homes by Zoom in the depths of a Maritime winter. The lecture is available to members on our private You Tube channel at <https://youtu.be/iuVkJzsm8Mo>.

If interested, it may be worthwhile to organize a visit to Innisfree and other gardens in the US North East when travel is possible again.

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The Meadow Garden - A Photo Essay

Donna Evers

At the November 2021 ARHS meeting Roslyn Duffus gave a presentation on the development of this project. We present some photos showing the progress of the Meadow garden.



The Beginning



Lots of green. June 2020



First blooms. Early August 2020.



Late August 2020. Thanks to gardening friends.



September 2020.



September 2020 visitor.

The Meadow Garden - A Photo Essay

Donna Evers



Spring 2021.



June 2021.



Mid-Summer 2021.



Grasses - September 2021



Late October 2021.



October 2021. Re-seeding with food for the birds.

Positions of Responsibility

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A visitor to the Meadow - October 2021. [Photo Donna Evers.]

Photo Album - A selection of ornamental ericaceous plants.



Rhododendrons and ferns. [Photo Jamie Ellison]



Andromeda polifolia ‘Blue Ice’. [Photo Jamie Ellison]



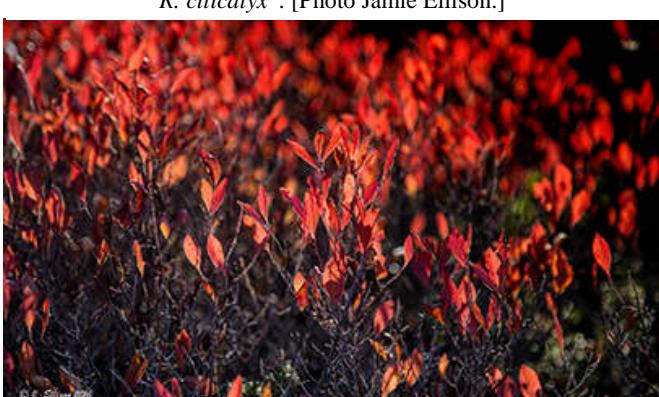
Phyllodoce careulea. [Photo Jamie Ellison]



R. cilicalyx . [Photo Jamie Ellison.]



R. quinquifolium . [Photo Jamie Ellison]



Vaccinium angustifolium. [Photo Jamie Ellison]



Kalmia polifolia. [Photo Jamie Ellison]



Enkianthus campanulatus. [Photo Sterling Levy]