

THE DIRT

Winter Issue 2021, Volume 47, Issue 4



2021 Industry Award Winning Projects page 4

Gravel Beds: a New Tree Growing Method page 26

Building Strategic Relationships page 23

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

Ashley Robinson
Ashley Robinson Landscape Designer
PO Box 28
Charlotte, VT 05445
802-922-1924
arobinsonld@gmail.com

VICE-PRESIDENT

Ralph Fitz-Gerald
Horsford Gardens & Nursery
2111 Greenbush Road
Charlotte, VT 05445
802-425-2811
field@horsfordnursery.com

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Gabriel Bushey
Crafted Landscapes, LLC
176 South Maple Street
Vergennes, VT 05491
802-233-8551
gabe.w.bushey@gmail.com

DIRECTORS

Ed Burke
Rocky Dale Gardens
806 Rocky Dale Road
Bristol, VT 05443
802-453-2782
ed@rockydalegardens.com

Ray DeFeo
Prides Corner Farm
122 Waterman Road
Lebanon, CT 06249
860-468-6052
rdefeo@pridescorner.com

Bruce Gagne
Gagne Insurance Agency
PO Box 1688
St. Albans, VT 05478
802-527-0350
bruce_gagne@american-national.com

Aaron Smith
S & D Landscapes
91 Ethan Allen Drive, Unit C
S. Burlington, VT 05403
802-497-0032
aaron@landscapevermont.com

Linzy Vos
Church Hill Landscapes, Inc.
898 Mason Hill North
Starksboro, VT 05445
802-673-0083
linzyvos@gmail.com

Annie White
Nectar Landscape Design Studio
PO Box 3773
Stowe, VT 05672
802-777-1350
annie@nectarvt.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kristina MacKulin
VNLA/Green Works
P.O. Box 92
N. Ferrisburgh, VT 05473
Toll Free: 888-518-6484
P: 802-425-5117
Kristina@vnla.org
www.vnla.org

COMMITTEES

BUDGET AND FINANCE
COMMITTEE CHAIR
Gabe Bushey - Crafted Landscapes, LLC

EVALUATION & PLANNING
COMMITTEE CHAIR
Ashley Robinson, Landscape Designer

INDUSTRY AWARDS COMMITTEE CHAIR
Ashley Robinson, Landscape Designer

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

MARKETING & EDUCATION
COMMITTEE CHAIR
Ashley Robinson, Landscape Designer

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR
Ashley Robinson, Landscape Designer

PROGRAM COMMITTEE CHAIR
Ralph Fitz-Gerald - Horsford Gardens & Nursery

RESEARCH & AWARDS

VERMONT CERTIFIED HORTICULTURIST
COMMITTEE CHAIR
Annie White - Nectar Landscape Design Studio

VOLUNTEER PROJECT OUTREACH
COMMITTEE CHAIR
Ashley Robinson, Landscape Designer

Advertise with us!

Contact the
VNLA office today!

888.518.6484



Connect with the VNLA/
Green Works on Social Media!

Connect with us, follow us and share our posts.
It's another way for us to help your business thrive.

You can find us at ...



Facebook: @vnla.vt & @vermontflowershow



Instagram: @vnla.vt & @vtflowershow



Dear Fellow VNLA Members & Friends,

Here we are in a new year and looking ahead to a new season. Later days, brighter light, and yes, melting snow, all signs of what's to come! Spring in flux, it's a tease but encouraging. Still, I hope you're all finding time to play and enjoy these late winter days.

Perhaps winter has you reading more or listening, watching, exploring, whatever your interests. I stumbled on this recently and thought I'd share-

"What we need at this moment is a fighting optimism."

-A quote by Bruce Springsteen in a podcast with Barack Obama.

It's a great expression and inspiring conversation among two icons in the world of politics and music. I've been thinking about how this feeling relates to many things, especially our Association, but more broadly to our industry.

While this was a conversation about politics, social movements, and national sentiments, it inherently addresses us as individuals, community members, and YOU! We're here because we CARE about this VNLA community and how WE can make a difference.

Our collective power is strong, and our work is impactful! So help spread the word about our VNLA. Be encouraged by the great work we do, the spaces we help create, maintain, manage and preserve. As VNLA members we have the power to make great change!

Let's put our fighting optimism to work for our VNLA and for our communities.

THANK YOU for continuing to support & to help strengthen our association!

Until next time,

Ashley



inside this issue

Board of Directors	2
The President's Letter	3
The Buzz	4
2021 Industry Award Winning Projects	
Welcome to New VNLA Members	
Calendar of Events	
Get Certified in 2022	
Leonard's Clippings	16
The Lab	19
Observations from the UVM Diagnostic Lab	
News from the VT Agency of Agriculture Foods & Markets	
The Idea Factory	22
Gardening Statistics in 2022	
Prides Corner Farm video	
The Peat Moss Dilemma	
Gravel Beds: An Exciting New Chapter of Successful Tree Growing Methods	
Strictly Business	29
Building Strategic Relationships	
New Member Profile: Standing Stone, LLC	
The Plant Lounge	32
Philadelphus coronarius 'E.A. Bowles'	

Cover Photo Credits:
Judith Irvén and Dick Conrad,
Photographer: Ilex verticillata.



THE BUZZ

the low down on what's up!

2021 Industry Award Winning Projects

The Industry Awards Program became a VNLA program in 2009 in an effort to recognize the outstanding work of our members. The objective of this program is to promote excellence and encourage greater public awareness of the aesthetic and environmental benefits of landscaping. This program is open to all current VNLA members who may enter up to three projects per year. All installed landscapes or maintenance properties are eligible. In addition, any specialty type project related to horticulture is also eligible. There are no “set categories” and no project is too small or large. Projects are judged on their own merits.

We are grateful for the entries we received and are happy to announce the winners. Please note that we changed the December 31st deadline to a mid-January, 2022 deadline. A panel of professionals met in January via Zoom to judge the entries. As always, the judges’ identities remain anonymous and we thank them for their time and expertise.

A big thank you to all who took the time to share and submit their work!! In looking ahead to 2022, keep track of your projects and consider making a submission later this year. We are looking for a variety of projects of all shapes and sizes.

Please view the winning projects on pages 5-12, as well as a full slide show on the VNLA/Green Works website which you can view [HERE](#). Presentation boards will be on display at our 2022 Summer Meeting and the 2023 Vermont Flower Show.

In addition, winners presented their projects at the Annual Winter Meeting & Trade Show held on February 10, 2022 via Zoom. The projects will also be highlighted in a *Seven Days* newspaper insert in late April.

Congratulations to the 2021 Industry Award Winners!!

EXCELLENCE AWARD

*Crafted Landscapes, LLC - Gabe Bushey
Vergennes, VT
Floating Boulder*

HONOR AWARD

*diStefano Landscaping, Inc. – Matt Blair
Essex Junction, VT
Great Street Streetscape*

HONOR AWARD

*George Wohlgemuth Landscapes - George Wohlgemuth
Woodstock, VT
Woodstock Pool*

HONOR AWARD

*Landshapes - Caroline Dudek
Richmond, VT
Revitalized Front Courtyard*

MERIT AWARD

*Vermont Stone & Horticulture - Josh Cohen
Burlington, VT
Killington Residence*



2021 INDUSTRY AWARD WINNER

Crafted Landscapes, LLC - Gabriel Bushey
Floating Boulder
Excellence Award



About this Project:

Our client wanted to create a contemplative, meditative space detached from the main living space of their home. They wanted to have a soft sound of streaming water to be the primary sound heard in the space which adds to the feeling of a retreat from daily life. The straight lines of the patio and pond edges balance the irregularity of the boulder and organic plantings. The steppingstones leading to the patio are also “floating” and made of the same granite material as the patio. Horizontal IPE fencing separates the space from the surrounding forest and provides a sense of seclusion. The other fencing is cedar and blends with an existing fence leading towards the house.

This project presented engineering challenges. How to create a water feature where a boulder weighing hundreds of pounds appears to float on a cushion of bubbling water.

It took a lot of effort and planning to make this work and we would rather not share all our secrets but pond liner, a pump within a separated pump vault, and a wooden edge that gives a final clean detail were all included. We worked with a metal fabrication company to make some of the components needed as well. The concept and engineering obstacles were tackled as a collaborative effort with the designer on the project. Much of the designing was done onsite as the project came together. The granite is material left over from a building facade and has been waiting for the right project. Metal pieces were fabricated to suspend the steps and a few pieces around the water feature have a more natural texture. The project has really matured even though it has only been one season. The plants have filled in including the lily pads which have become a haven for several happy frogs.

Gabe Bushey



2021 INDUSTRY AWARD WINNER

diStefano Landscaping, Inc.- Matt Blair
Great Street Streetscape
Honor Award



About this Project:

This project was a unique and technically challenging undertaking for our team. Because we were the subcontractors on this commercial project many of the “judging criteria” will not apply directly but there are many other elements that make it an award worthy undertaking. Our scope of work included three main components each with their own sets of challenges:

1. Street trees planted using a soil cell system to provide an environment for these trees to thrive as they mature.
2. Permeable pavers to help minimize runoff and pollution of Lake Champlain.
3. Paver crosswalks installed over a bituminous asphalt setting bed using a neoprene adhesive.

All three of these items required a team that was committed to a high level of attention to detail and an ability to execute an installation based on intricately detailed plans and specifications.

We accomplished this amid a start and stop project that was slated to be finished in April, 2019 but took five months longer due to obstacles along the way outside of our control. The result is a beautiful and thriving streetscape that is appreciated and enjoyed by residents and visitors to downtown Burlington.

The street trees required the construction of plastic forms to help minimize compaction of soils under sidewalks and curbs, ultimately giving the roots of the trees and other



plantings room to grow and mature. Each cell location was specified on the plan and had to be installed at the correct elevation to allow room for the other necessary infrastructures. Then planting soil was installed over a geotextile root barrier to help keep the soil from migrating out and the roots from negatively impacting the surrounding structures. The large 3.5" caliper trees were properly transported and then planted within this system at the exact height specified making sure that root flares were exposed. Two years later and the tree are all thriving.

The permeable pavers required installation of specified aggregates clear of any soil or stone fines that could inhibit the system to work at it's peak potential. There were at total of 25 individual sections of pavers spreading throughout the project. The installation required the paver sections to meet with the existing grades of the sidewalks, curbs and rows which made for a challenge as the team established the elevation and layout of setting bed. The paver installation required precise cutting around bike racks, post and poles. The system was finished with the

sweeping in of #8 aggregate between the pavers allowing water to flow freely into the open aggregate below.

The clay brick paver walkways were installed using a herringbone pattern which provides the best dispersal of tire pressure to protect the integrity of the installation. The specification required the installation of bituminous asphalt which is hot and sticks to every service making it very difficult to work with. The team carefully spread and leveled the bituminous setting bed across the road. Unlike a sand setting bed, there is little to no room for adjusting the elevation of the paver after this step, making laser sharp accuracy a must for a successful installation. The pavers were then placed using the neoprene adhesive, another messy, sticky and unforgiving product. It does not wash off of tools, clothes or pavers.

Once the dust settled and the road was opened back up the project looks beautiful and was installed to last many years in the future.

Matt Blair



GET OUT OF THE
CLASSROOM AND INTO
YOUR FIELD.

Earn your associate degree in
Landscape Contracting.

Visit vtc.edu/landscape-design
or contact admissions at (800) 442-8821.

VERMONT TECH
Small College. Big Outcomes.



NATIVE PERENNIALS
POLLINATOR PLANTS
SUCCULENTS
SHADE PLANTS
RAIN GARDEN PLANTS
CUSTOM GROW AVAILABLE



ESSEX, VT • FULLCIRCLEGARDENS.COM
[@FULLCIRCLEGARDENSVT](https://www.instagram.com/FULLCIRCLEGARDENSVT)



2021 INDUSTRY AWARD WINNER

George Wohlgemuth, LLC - George Wohlgemuth
Woodstock Pool
Honor Award



About this Project:

Our client wanted a pool on a side hill without making it look forced. In their words, they didn't want it 'shoehorned' into the property. The first step was to determine the town conservation setback from pond. Once established we could approximate the pool location and determine a feasible size. We also had to show the town that run off from the hillside to the pond would be the same or less than the existing run off. We could have gone farther into the woods with the pool but did not want to remove more trees and we did not want the pool too far into the shade of the remaining trees. We spoke with the home builder who said significant ledge existed on site. To make sure it wasn't an amount that made the project exorbitant, we hired a blasting company to drill test holes on a ten by ten grid in the proposed pool footprint. We

found a small section in the northwest corner. Next, we had to determine the level of the pool and patio relative to the screen porch which is the access from house. We wanted 4 - 6" risers (3 steps) down from the porch. We then studied various angles of the pool into the hillside to find a reasonable grade above the pool without making the retaining wall too high. We settled on 1.3 to 1 versus 1.7 to 1 existing with meant a 5' wall in the corner. Soil on bank is sandy and therefore drains well so it wouldn't press too hard on wall.

We shaped a subtle swale in the bank heading east, away from wall. Water from this swale and from the east end of the bank above the pool drains to a surface drain at the north end of the patio with the 6" pipe that runs under the patio and daylights to a drainage swale on road.



This pool location left the pool at an angle from the house. We designed the patio with an arc to connect the lines of pool with the lines of screen porch. We located steps on the arc to meet the existing fieldstone steps coming up from the rock garden and pond. Patio stone, pool coping, and steps from the patio to lawn are Blue Mist Granite. Patio pitches are at 1% with drainage also tied into 6" pipe from the surface drain. Final grading design meant less, not more, water from the hill runs into pond.

Patio stones are 24" wide at 24", 30", and 36" lengths to prevent grid appearance which would have added another angular dimension to project. We built a block wall to retain the area at screen porch because it's less wide than a fieldstone wall which meant more topsoil/compost mix for plants along the path. We capped it with 1' wide strip of granite to match the patio.

The wall design at the west end of pool took some thought. We could have stepped it down faster to meet the existing grade beyond, or we could have stepped it down in three equal lengths across the back of the pool. We chose to drop it with the grade (more or less) and then run a 2' high

section to the end. This 2' high section helps hide the utility pad and box (holding pool heater, pump, filters) beyond the pool, creates a place to sit above the deep end, and adds a design element the owners found very attractive.

Cornus swida pumila, (shade tolerant and with dark green foliage to match hemlocks in woods beyond) and *Clethra alnifolia*, chosen for subtle white blossom and fragrance, were planted behind the 2' high section of the wall to increase screening.

Three small sugar maples were planted on the bank to naturalize it. Miss Kim lilacs and *Baptisia australis* was planted at the block wall beneath the porch stepping stones. Dwarf Siberian sage, *Geranium* 'Max Frei' and Blue Oat Grass 'Sapphire' was planted along the stepping stones and patio. Hayscented ferns, purchased in 1'x2' sods, much like lawn sod, was planted on the bank above and below the pool. Cinnamon fern (individual sods) were planted on the west side of the wall for variety and to match the existing on edge of pond.

George Wohlgemuth

THINK GREEN BE GREEN



Recycle Your Nursery Pots with Prides Corner Farms



Better Together

Contact Ray DeFeo for more info rdefeo@pridescorner.com
A Wholesale Nursery located in Lebanon, Conn pridescorner.com (800) 437-5168



2021 INDUSTRY AWARD WINNER

Landshapes - Caroline Dudek
Revitalized Front Courtyard
Honor Award



About this Project:

In late Summer 2019, we were contacted about renovating an existing courtyard landscape. The contemporary style home was built in 1985 by the clients as their primary residence, the original landscaping was installed in 1986. It was then renovated in 2013, to address several minor issues with the original brick paver walkway, and to update some plantings. Unfortunately, the 2013 renovation did not go as desired. The biggest issue: the contractor tore up the entire walkway, and did not reinstall it on a proper base, or establish the correct grade. This led to the walkway ramping and dipping, the stone stairs sinking, causing drainage problems, and making it slippery in wet, or icy weather. The clients also wanted us to improve the plantings; many were overgrown, or in poor condition, with some invasive perennials, and minimal seasonal interest. Their goals were to create a functional and

welcoming courtyard, with colorful gardens, that complements their informal style.

A design was developed reflecting the clients' wish to keep a similar walkway layout. The walkway is the main unifying feature for the courtyard, connecting the two entries, garage, and driveway, so the curves and proportions were refined to create better flow. One challenging area was the south end of the courtyard. It's a high traffic area with multiple grades in a small space.

Construction began in May, 2020. The existing walkway and many plants were removed. Some existing trees, perennials, Spring bulbs, and shrubs were incorporated into the new design, either remaining in their original location, or transplanted to a suitable spot. Due to the heavy clay native soil, it was crucial to maximize drainage for the new walkway. The sub-grade was pitched towards the north, fabric was laid,



along with drainage pipe, 8-10 inches of 3/4" and 2+ inches of 3/8" open graded clean stone, and Geogrid was installed in preparation for the pavers. Almost (500) sq. ft. of red 'Glen-Gery' 53-DD molded paving brick was laid in a herringbone pattern. The red paver complements the home's gray color, adding warmth to the space. Stairs were installed to address the grade changes. The homeowners liked the natural face of the bluestone 'Nursery' stairs which reflected their desired informal style. The new stairs improve walkability and safety. Lastly, the brick veneer at both entries had deteriorated and was replaced with thermal bluestone veneer.

The homeowners are especially fond of Azaleas and Rhododendrons. This very protected site is zone 5a, and well suited for Azaleas, Rhododendrons, and Japanese and Korean Maples. We transplanted two mature *Rhododendron yedoense poukanense* 'Compact', and they now symmetrically frame the front entry. Varieties of deciduous 'Lights' Azaleas, and a mix of small leafed Rhododendrons were added to expand the Spring display. At planting, all plants were drenched with an organic fertilizer containing Mycorrhizae to reduce planting stress and promote vigorous root growth. It was especially beneficial to the Azaleas, Rhododendrons, and transplants.

The new 'Green Velvet' Boxwood hedge along the driveway, and existing Redbud, frame the east side of the courtyard. There is a progression of seasonal interest with plantings of *Nepeta* 'Walker's Low', *Astilbe* 'Visions', *Hemerocallis* varieties, *Geranium* 'Bevan's Variety', *Heuchera* 'Plum Pudding', *Hosta* 'Patriot', *Alchemilla* 'Thriller', and *Hydrangeas* 'Blue Billows' and 'Annabelle', which reflect the homeowners preferred color pallet. In Fall, *Anemone* 'Robustissima', 'Northwind' Korean Maple, 'Tamukeyama' Japanese Maple, and the existing *Viburnum* 'Mariesi' shine with their foliage displays. In Winter, a mix of evergreen shrubs and a 'Golden Mop' *Chamaecyparis*, give winter structure. Groupings of perennials are repeated throughout the courtyard providing continuity. A wonderful connection and flow within the courtyard beckons you to sit and enjoy.

The project was completed in two weeks, and just under the \$42,000.00 budget. The once uninviting and unusable courtyard, is now revitalized and is where the clients' grandchildren enjoy playing. This charming courtyard reflects the homeowners' desire for an inviting, beautiful space that functions for family and guests.

Caroline Dudek

LOW IMPACT PRODUCTS *for* HIGH PERFORMANCE LANDSCAPES



ENGINEERED SOILS
HARVARD SCIENCE



CU-STRUCTURAL SOIL®
PORTSMOUTH



BEACH NOURISHMENT SOLUTIONS
NEWBURYPORT BEACH



PLANTING SOILS
DARTMOUTH



STABILIZED STONEDUST
SNETT TRAIL

BIORETENTION SOILS • FIBER SOILS • ROOTZONES • STABILIZED STONEDUST
CU-STRUCTURAL SOIL® • ATHLETIC FIELD BLENDS • GREEN ROOF MEDIA



Experience. Quality. Consistency.

Contact us for product specifications, testing results,
project analysis, and customized quotes.

JEFF TOOMEY

JEFF@READCUSTOMSOILS.COM

603.235.8420



READCUSTOMSOILS.COM



2021 INDUSTRY AWARD WINNER

Vermont Stone and Horticulture - Josh Cohen
Killington Residence
Merit Award



About this Project:

This was a project completed in 2018 for a newly built second home for our client. The scope included a front walkway, rear dining patio and a lower level fire pit patio surrounded by boulders harvested from the site. We also completed full foundation plantings, landscape lighting and sod for lawn areas. Project materials included Techo-Bloc Blu 60 smooth finish in Chestnut Brown and a Chocolate Brown Hera border for the front walkway. In the rear we also used Blu 60 in Chestnut brown but with a slate finish to pair better with natural boulders.

The front walkway provides a smooth flow to the entrance and is nicely lit by the landscape lighting. The firepit patio was the main feature of the project. The firepit was veneered to match the veneer used extensively on the building and we fabricated brownstone caps in house. Particular attention was paid to the scribing the steps and pavers to the boulders surrounding the patio.

This was an out-of-town project, approximately two hours from Burlington so it required careful coordination to maximize efficiency. The typical challenges of working out of our normal service area usually include finding aggregate suppliers, dumpsites and bulk material suppliers. Our speciality suppliers such as plants and stone are willing to deliver throughout the state so that part was not an issue. Running over schedule on out-of-town projects also comes with the financial impacts of having to pay extra per diems and lodging when the schedule gets off.

Fortunately this project flowed smoothly despite some heavy fall rains. The stonework crew wrapped up in a timely fashion and the green crew followed behind and despite the aforementioned rain sodded and planted the site to our satisfaction. Final photos were taken by [Lenny Christopher Photography](#).

Josh Cohen



Welcome to our NEW VNLA Members!

Branch Out Burlington!

Margaret Skinner

93 Howard Street
Burlington, VT 05401
802-656-5440
margaret.skinner@uvm.edu
www.branchoutburlington.org
Associate
Category: Non-profit

Saratoga Sod Farm

Laurie Griffen

1670 Route 4
Stillwater, NY 12170
518-664-5038 / 518-265-0160
info@saratogasod.com
www.saratogasodfarm.com
Associate Member
Category: Sod Farm

Standing Stone, LLC

Brian Post

197 Baker Road
Springfield, VT 05156
802-245-4766
brian@standingstonevt.com
www.standingstonevt.com

Jennifer Goulet

185 Upper Loveland Road
Norwich, VT 05055
802-443-3909
jgoulet08@gmail.com
Active Member
Category: Landscape Install/
Maintenance, Educator

Savage Farms, Inc.

Jay Savage

128 Lower Road
Deerfield, MA 01342
413-774-4935 / 413-773-0590
savageadmin@comcast.net
www.savagefarms.com
Associate Member
Category: Turf care, Sod Farm,
Supplier



Northeast Greenhouse & Nursery Supply
a division of Northeast Nursery, Inc. - Est. 1982

WHAT WE OFFER. . .

- Professional Growing Media
- Pots & Containers
- Soils & Mulches
- Soluble Fertilizers
- Injectors/Sprayers/Foggers
- Control Release Fertilizers
- Control Products
- Films & Coverings
- Irrigation Supplies

PIERSON NURSERIES, INC.
GROWING FOR OVER 40 YEARS

Phone (207) 499-2994 • Fax (207) 499-2912
sales@piersonnurseries.com • www.piersonnurseries.com

Mailing Address:
24 Buzzell Road
Biddeford ME 04005

Physical Address:
291 Waterhouse Road
Dayton ME 04005

CARRYING A FULL LINE OF B&B AND CONTAINER PLANTS READY TO BE DELIVERED TO YOU

- NATIVE PLANTS
- SHADE TREES
- FLOWERING SHRUBS
- EVERGREENS
- FERNS & GRASSES
- PERENNIALS
- WETLAND PLANTS
- BROADLEAFS

Check our website for our most recent availability (password: pni2021)

Or contact our office if you would like to receive our weekly availability emails

Northeast Golf & Turf Supply
a division of Northeast Nursery, Inc. - Est. 1982

WHAT WE OFFER. . .

- Granular Fertilizers
- Control Products
- Turfgrass Seed
- Specialty Nutrients
- Soil Conditioners
- Golf Course Accessories

Tim Madden • 802-222-7341 • tmadden@northeastnursery.com





CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 22, 2022

1pm - 4:30 pm - Virtual
NDAL presents: Art, Music, & Ephemerality in the Designed Landscape w/ Larry Weaner & W. Gary Smith
 Learn more [HERE](#).

March 24, 2022

9am - 2:30 pm - Virtual
UMass Extension: The Invasive Plant Issue & Invasive Plant ID
 Learn more [HERE](#).

March 29, 2022

1pm - 2:30 pm - Virtual
NDAL presents: Landscape Commonalities: People & Plants of the World w/ Wambui Ippolito
 Learn more [HERE](#).

March 29, 2022 & March 30, 2022

8:30 am- 12:15 pm - Virtual
UMass Extension Spring Kickoff for Landscapers
 Learn more [HERE](#).

March 30, 2022

Noon - 1:30 pm - Virtual
Perennial Plant Assoc. Pollination Ecology
 Learn more [HERE](#).

March 31 - April 1, 2022

ArborEXPO '22 Conference & Trade Show @ the Big E Springfield, MA
 Learn more [HERE](#).

April 7, 2022

Virtual - 9am - 2:30 pm
UMass Extension: Developing an Invasive Plant Management Program
 Learn more [HERE](#).

July 21 - 25, 2022

APLD International Landscape Design Conference
 Chicago, IL
 Learn more [HERE](#).

August 1-3, 2022

Garden Center Conference & Expo
 Orlando, FL
 Learn more [HERE](#).

August 1-5, 2022

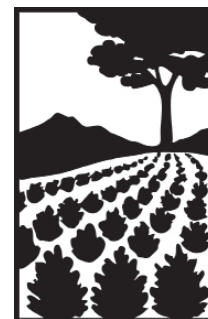
Perennial Plant Association 2022 National Symposium
 Lancaster, PA
 Learn more [HERE](#).

Horsford's has it all for wholesale

Your one-stop shop for the most diverse selection of trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals in Vermont! Horsford's has over 30 acres of field and container production dedicated to growing hardy plants that survive Vermont winters. *We consider anyone who sells or installs plants as their primary source of income a potential wholesale customer.*

Wholesale pricelist available
Email wholesale@horsfordnursery.com

2111 GREENBUSH ROAD • CHARLOTTE, VT 05445



HORSFORD
 Gardens & Nursery



WHOLESALE-David Berg
wholesale@horsfordnursery.com
 (802) 922-4628 direct line



PERENNIALS-Kristin Sprengle
kristin@horsfordnursery.com
 (802) 881-7684 direct line



FIELD-Ralph Fitz-Gerald
field@horsfordnursery.com
 (802) 425-2811



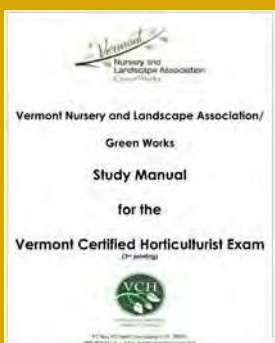
Specializing in Vermont Grown Plants

A Claussen tradition since 1972



Claussen's Greenhouse offers an extensive selection of plants, including annuals, perennials, herbs, vegetables, chrysanthemums, poinsettias, spring bulbs, tropical houseplants and much more.

187 Main Street, Colchester, VT 05446 ~ (802) 878-2361 ~ WWW.CLAUSSENS.COM

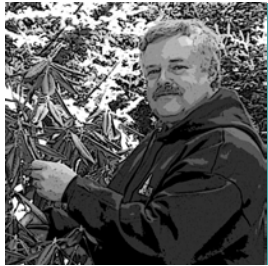


Get Certified in 2022!

Don't delay and order your study manual today!

Exam offered virtually
by appointment and
in-person by appointment.

888.518.6484



LEONARD'S CLIPPINGS!

by Dr. Leonard Perry, UVM Horticulture Professor Emeritus

Winter, 2021/22

Each semester I give a **course snapshot of the PSS department**, reflecting focus and student interest. Here's what is offered this spring, back to in-person unless noted (as online or hybrid—25 to 75% online and rest in person):

Intro to Agroecology (Izzo, 150), A Bug's Life (hybrid, Lewins, 158), Drawing and Painting Botanicals (Zahn, 15), Home Vegetable Growing (online, White, 111), Pollinators and Perennials (online, White, 41), Sustainable Vegetable Crops Production (Stievater, 26), Greenhouse Operations (White, 27), Commercial Plant Propagation (Starrett, 48), Permaculture (online, White, 48), Soil Fertility and Conservation (Gorres, 34), Diversified Farm Planning (Bradshaw, 25), Agricultural Policy and Ethics (Bradshaw, 11), Biological Control (Chen, 19), Ecological Landscape Design (Hurley, 21), Soil/Water Pollution/Bioremediation (Faulkner, 23), and several small specialty and higher level graduate courses.

In addition, during Winter Session (January) were Pollinators and Perennials (online, White, 43, same as spring offering), and my Home Hops Growing (online, 25).

One of my main projects in retirement has been continued teaching of my online courses for PSS which include for this Spring: Indoor Plants (25), Garden Flowers (27), Flowers and Foliage (25), and



Perennial Garden Design (25). I turned the home vegetable course over to Annie, and after this summer I plan to “retire” from teaching these other courses as well.

In PSS Department and Campus news:

- In October, Dr. Mark Starrett and the UVM Hort Club assisted the VNLA with a volunteer landscape project in collaboration with Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity House in South Burlington. (photo courtesy facebook.com/uvmpps)
- “Congratulations **PSS alum Jacob Suissa**, recipient of the Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching of Undergraduates at Harvard. Jacob was a self-designed major who worked closely with Mark Starrett. Upon graduating UVM he left to pursue a Ph.D. at Harvard University in the Department of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology.” (PSS Facebook)

•UVM Extension has a **new Master Gardener coordinator**, Debra Heleba. Deb has worked in Extension agriculture for over 30 years starting with the Apple Team in PSS, the Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Women's Ag Network, Land Link Vermont, the Northwest Crops and Soils Team and on-line educational programs for adults, public communications, social media, program evaluation and web management. Deb will be a



wonderful addition to the popular statewide Master Gardener program and officially began her duties on January 4.

“Each year the National Garden Bureau selects one annual, one perennial, one bulb crop, one edible, and one shrub as our **“Year of the” Crops**. Plants are chosen because they are popular, easy-to-grow, widely adaptable, genetically diverse, and versatile.” The houseplant of the year for 2022 is peperomia, gladiolus the bulb of the year, verbena the annual of the year (this was the original category they awarded for many years), lilac the





shrub of the year, phlox the perennial of the year, and salad greens the vegetable of the year for 2022. If you sell any of these, use their additional marketing in your merchandising. (ngb.org/year-of-plants-2022) (peperomias photo courtesy NGB).

This is always the time of year we see stats on trends. Speaking of houseplants, here's one (courtesy Mark Starrett from a CBS Saturday Morning show) on **the strong trend in houseplants**,

which I've seen reflected in my own online indoor plants course. "Since the pandemic started, 63% of American households added houseplants. Between 2019 and 2020, there was an increase of 4.5 million households with houseplants and the upward trend continued in 2021."

The Garden Media Group's annual **Garden Trends Report for 2022** is now available to read and download (www.gardenmediagroup.com). One of their trends I mentioned in the last *Dirt* issue is that **green, particularly clover green, will be trending**. Another trend I found

interesting, and relevant to our industry (perhaps more so even in Vermont), was that "Half of Gen Z (53%) and Millennial (49%) shoppers

are **lots of new gardeners—18.3 million** in fact, a group the gardens trend gurus term the "**Backyard Aficionados**".

Planning for this spring and year? Don't forget to look at Axiom's **Garden Trends for 2022**. After surveying 1,300-plus people, Axiom Market Insight Research has some cheery news about gardening.

About 45% of all respondents spent more time in the garden in 2021 than they did in

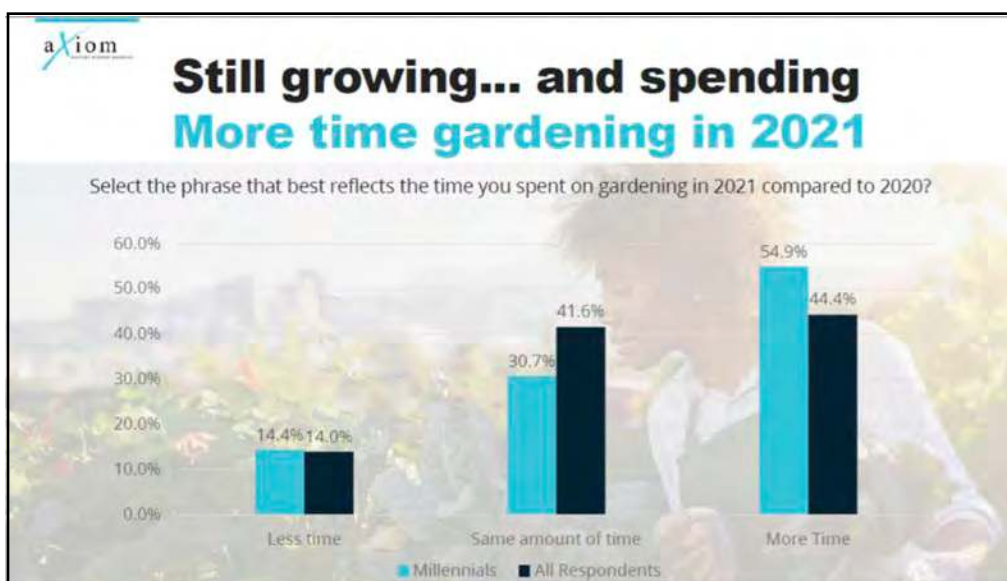
2020. Looking at age groups, nearly 55% of Millennial respondents spent more time in the garden this year. Maybe, finally, we're getting some things right because 84% of those surveyed felt successful in their gardening this year.

Even better? 62% of respondents said they will plant more in 2022. (GreenTalks, Ball)

<https://axiomcom.com/2022-gardening-survey/>

want to cut back on their Amazon shopping... and all generations feel guilty about buying there... **We know when we spend money locally, the money stays local**... When new businesses open in unusual places And houseplants surfaced again in this garden trends report. "...we **expect sustained growth in the houseplant category**... People are nostalgic for the 70's. They love pothos, ficus, spider plants, African violets, and ferns—lots of ferns." (photo courtesy GMG)

Keep in mind in your client interactions and marketing/ merchandising this year that there





GARDENERS

SUPPLY COMPANY
Commercial Division

Winterr Commercial Hours

Weekdays 9am - 6pm, Sat. 9am - 6pm & Sun. 10am - 5pm

472 Marshall Avenue, Wiliston, VT
802-658-2433 • wholesale@gardeners.com



THE LAB

putting it under the lens . . .



Observations from the UVM Plant Diagnostic Lab

by Ann Hazelrigg, PhD.

The American chestnut, *Castanea dentata*, was a majestic tree making up more than 50% of eastern forests from Mississippi, up through the Champlain valley and Connecticut river valley of Vermont and New Hampshire. This tree was prized due to its fast growth and large height and girth that yielded straight-grained rot-resistant wood. The wood was used for a wide range of products including furniture, building materials, flooring, fence posts and later, telephone poles and railroad ties. As George Hepting wrote in his article "The Death of the American chestnut" in the *Journal of Forest History*, "Not only was baby's crib likely made of chestnut, but chances were, so was the old man's coffin." I was recently in a pathology lab at University of Massachusetts and my colleague pointed out all the dark-grained lab cabinets were made of chestnut!

The nuts from the trees provided essential wildlife food and were also



Above: American Chestnuts in the mid to late 19th century. American Chestnut Foundation.
Below: Native range of the American Chestnut, *Castanea dentata*. American Chestnut Foundation.



collected for human consumption. Chestnuts were often shipped to major cities for eating fresh or for roasting at Christmas. Farmers took advantage of the dropped nuts by pasturing cattle and pigs so they could forage among the trees.

At the turn of the 20th century, a disease called chestnut blight caused by the fungal pathogen,

Cryphonectria parasitica, arrived in New York, most likely on infected nursery stock from Asia. The fungus causes a canker that appears as a yellowish-red sunken area of the bark of main stems and smaller branches, rapidly expanding until the affected portion is girdled and killed.

The pathogen quickly swept eastern forests and by 1950, almost 100% of American chestnuts were reduced to stumps. However, the chestnut is not extinct; many of these stumps still exist in forests today. The root systems are unaffected by the pathogen, so the trees continually send up adventitious shoots that eventually die back, reducing the once mighty tree to basically an early



succession shrub. There are still a few mature chestnuts in Vermont that have escaped the blight. VJ Comai, Burlington City Arborist and VNLA member, mentioned “there are three healthy chestnuts in Ethan Allen Park in Burlington with the largest being 18 inches in girth-a teenager!”

The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF), founded in 1983, is working hard to “rescue the iconic American chestnut tree and return it to its native range in the eastern U.S. forests.” The Foundation is using a three-pronged approach to saving the tree they have termed the “3BUR” approach. The strategy includes using the tools of traditional breeding, taking advantage of innovations with genetic modification and the use of biocontrol to rescue this iconic tree and restore it to its native range. For more information on the 3BUR approach, go to <https://acf.org/>.



Chestnut blight canker on stem with discolored bark. L. Haugen, USFS, www.bugwood.org.

The regional VT/NH chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation (<https://acf.org/vt-nh/>) is always interested in identifying new locations of chestnut trees in our region. I have been a member for the past couple of years and new members are always welcomed! As a bonus for being a member, we are offering free fertile wild-type American chestnut nuts to Chapter members for planting (until supplies run out.) To join TACF and the regional chapter go to <https://acf.org> and click on membership.

Literature cited: Hepting GH. 1974. Death of the American chestnut. Journal of Forest History 18(3):61–67 <[10.2307/3983346](https://doi.org/10.2307/3983346)>.

Fairfax Perennial Farm

Wholesale Perennial Growers



7 Blackberry Hill Road ~ Fairfax, VT 05454

802-849-2775

perennialfarm@surfglobal.net



THE
AMERICAN
CHESTNUT
FOUNDATION®

<https://acf.org/>

PETER DeBRUSK
CELL 603-819-9700
p1dturf@comcast.net

305 Hubbard Road
Berwick, ME 03901



TO PLACE AN ORDER
CALL TOLL FREE 1-800-556-6985

OESCO IS YOUR PARTNER IN PRUNING

Manual, electric, anvil & bypass pruners, pneumatic loppers & more



From brands you know & trust, including:



Whether you're pruning landscapes, invasives, fruit trees or shrubbery,

**CALL OESCO.
WE'VE GOT WHAT YOU NEED.**

- Accurate cutting
- High quality materials
- Super-sharp blades
- Durable, long-lasting tools
- Ergonomic & low impact

68
YEARS

Supplying Growers, Gardeners



**Call us for a catalog
800-634-5557
www.oescoinc.com**

OESCO, Inc. PO Box 540 / 8 Ashfield Road, Route 116 Conway, Massachusetts 01341



Cobble Creek Nursery, LLC

We grow a diverse selection of B&B trees and shrubs at our nursery in Monkton, Vermont. We offer shade trees, ornamental trees, flowering shrubs and dwarf conifers. At Cobble Creek Nursery we are known for quality **Vermont Grown** plants, exceptional service and extensive woody plant knowledge. Stop by for a visit or give John a call for more information.



John Padua
991 Tyler Bridge Road, Bristol, VT 05443
phone/fax: 802-453-3889 / e-mail: cobcreek@gmavt.net





News from the VT Agency of Agriculture, Foods & Markets

By: Judy Rosovsky, VT State Entomologist

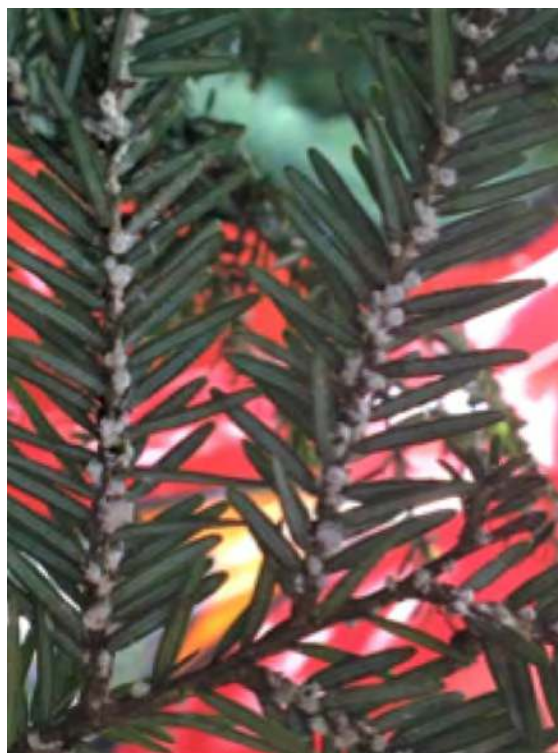
Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Rule and Hemp Rule Updates plus the latest insect activities.

[resource-management-division/plant-health-and-pest-management/plant/plant.](#)

While I write this the leading edge of a snowstorm has arrived, leading me to contemplate snow removal or the lack thereof from days of old. Being snow bound in the remote parts of Vermont must have made our current COVID isolation look like luxury, with phones and tv's and other forms of communication and entertainment readily available. Maybe things aren't as bad as we think, in comparison. If you yearn for the olden days, check out this history of snow removal: <https://www.marketplace.org/2014/02/14/brief-history-snow-removal/>.

Regulatory Updates:

The long-awaited hemlock woolly adelgid rule changes have passed through the legislative process and are now in effect. This fall the Vermont Agency of Agriculture (VAAFM) and the Agency of Natural Resources amended the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) external quarantine rule, and these amendments went into effect on December 3rd, 2021. A quarantine remains in place for nurseries importing hemlock from outside of Vermont. All hemlock stock entering Vermont are still required to be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate attesting that the plants are pest free. All nursery stock must be inspected by VAAFM Plant Health staff prior to being released for sale. And the amended rule allows hemlock nursery stock to come into the state from counties under a quarantine, but they must be treated for HWA with a pesticide approved by AAFM. Other changes include the deregulation of hemlock logs, lumber and chips as these hemlock products have demonstrated a low risk of spreading HWA. For details on the revised rule, please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/public-health-agricultural->



Hemlock woolly adelgid on hemlock.

If you have any questions, please contact me at judy.rosovsky@vermont.gov.

To summarize, nurseries and other businesses are now allowed to purchase and import hemlock trees from counties known to have hemlock woolly adelgid, (HWA), as long as those trees have been treated for HWA and are free of HWA on arrival. They must be inspected by Plant Health staff prior to sale. Logs and related items are no longer being regulated by the VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. Please be sure that the hemlock trees are not infested with elongate hemlock scale. More information and photographs of these two hemlock pests can be found in previous issues of this newsletter (Fall 2021, Spring 2020) and at

https://extension.unh.edu/sites/default/files/migrated_unmanaged_files/Resource005573_Rep7772.pdf.

In other regulatory news, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets' Hemp Program received approval from the Agricultural Marketing Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) of the **Vermont Hemp Production plan**. The approved plan supports the Vermont Hemp Rules and governs registration, production, and compliance for hemp cultivation beginning in 2022. All grower registrants should be aware of and thinking about these programmatic changes required by the 2018 Farm Bill, USDA's final rule, and as reflected in Vermont Hemp Production plan, and how it may impact your operations.

Updates on Significant Invasive Species:

Emerald ash borer, the ash tree killing wood boring iridescent green beetle, has now been found in 13 out of 14

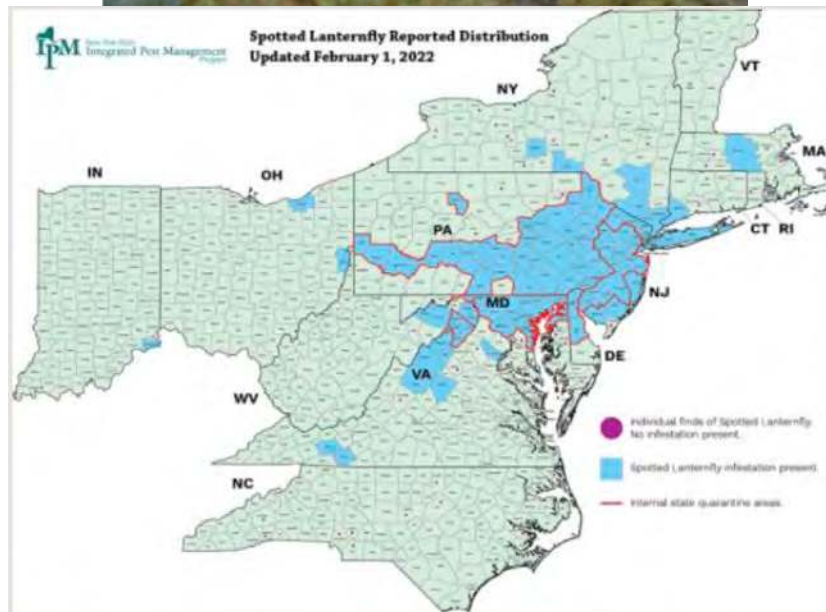


Vermont counties. Only Essex County has no known infestations. An updated map can be found at <https://vtinvasives.org/land/emerald-ash-borer-vermont>.

Please note that this map has been modified to indicate the intensity of the infestation as well as the location. Darker colors denote a more extensive infestation than lighter colors.

It is difficult to predict what will happen this coming spring with the *Lymantria dispar* (LDD's) formerly known as gypsy moths. For the past 30 years they have been kept to low populations by the fungus *Entomophaga maimaiga*. The dry weather we've experienced appears to have reduced the amount of this fungus available to infect LDD's. Larva killed by *E. maimaiga* characteristically hang head down where they die, and some moth cadavers were observed this summer. It is not clear whether enough caterpillars were infected before they pupated (spun cocoons) to prevent another big, defoliating population from forming. The standard treatment for LDD's is to use the

biocontrol *Bacillus thuringiensis*, but this needs to be applied while the caterpillars are in their 2nd instar, when they are still quite small at 10 mm or about 3/8th of an inch. So the decision to spray or treat LDD's has to come long before they have started defoliating your ornamental plants. LDD's have a large range of hosts, so if your nursery or landscaping business was in an area that was defoliated last year consider scouting for LDD's this May. After the caterpillars hatch they



Top: *Lymantria dispar* (formerly known as gypsy moth) larva killed by the fungus *Entomophaga maimaiga*, in typical head down position. Center: First through 3rd instar SLF nymphs. Bottom: Map of current known SLF distribution. Please note that the live SLF found in VT were eradicated. Map courtesy of NY State IPM.

climb trees and balloon (spin a thread and float from it) from the tree tops, so even if you don't see egg masses nearby you may still experience defoliation from these parachuting pests.

The colorful invasive insect Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) continues to spread around the eastern US. As spring progresses (which may be hard to envision right now) please keep your eyes out for the nymphs. They are hard to find, despite their bright colors. If you see or suspect that you have SLF at your business, please try to catch or photograph a specimen and let us know. The AGR Help Desk can be reached at (802) 828-2430 or AGR.Helpdesk@vermont.gov.

Sanitation Reminder:

Before spring arrives, take a look at your greenhouses or nursery beds and review your sanitation practices. This is a good time to consider how you can implement good sanitation year-round, even during the busy season.

Sanitation revolves around getting rid of weeds, algae and plant debris and preventing their return. One first step towards better sanitation is considering where you dispose of these items. Insects usually leave some visible sign of their presence but diseases can be more subtle and harder to see and guard against. Any material that you collect for disposal needs to be relocated, and where is that going to be?

Any pile of diseased or insect infested material is a harborage or storage area or even a broadcasting platform



for those pests. Bury, bag, or compost your plant remnants or find a sheltered location far from your healthy stock where the wind won't blow pathogens and insects right back to your growing areas. This is a good time to start training your suppliers to only send you healthy plants. As your spring plants start to arrive, inspect roots, stems and leaves and reject any unhappy or pest infested material. Pests don't confine themselves to only the plants that came from your supplier. They are happy to spread to any plant host, and to as many hosts as they can find. Isolate incoming plants for at least 3 weeks, develop sensible disposal methods, clean and sanitize everything in the greenhouse and everything that goes in and out of the greenhouse, and save yourself trouble and money later in the season.



Flea beetle can overwinter on crop debris.



**BOOST YOUR BENCHES
and YOUR BUSINESS**

with EHR

Access the latest cutting-edge genetics,
with over 80,000 plants from
over 270 suppliers

Discover a wide range of sources and
solutions for everything from
young plants and greenhouses,
to nursery stock and tropicals...

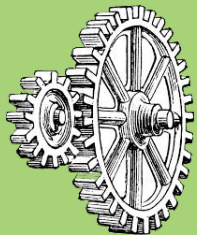
Vegetative & Seed Plants	Nursery Stock
Perennials	Tropicals & Foliage
Tissue Culture	and more!
Greenhouses	

GROWING STRONGER WITH YOU



CONTACT US TODAY!
David J. Toohey | New England Field Rep
dtoohey@ehrnet.com | 401-226-8876

**Eason Horticultural
Resources**



THE IDEA FACTORY

tips & trends, food for thought...

As Reported at Garden Pals:

Gardening Statistics in 2022 (incl. COVID & Millennials)

Highlights of statistics on gardening:

- Covid pandemic created **18.3 million new gardeners**, most of whom are millennials.
- 42% of gardeners **spent more time** gardening during the Covid pandemic.
- Global **online sales** of gardening goods doubled during the Covid pandemic.
- **55% of American** households engage in gardening activities.
- Millennials make up 29% of **gardener demographics**.
- Millennials have an increasing interest in **cannabis cultivation**.
- American adults **spend \$48 billion** on lawn and gardening equipment each year.
- Average garden **yields \$600** of produce in a year.
- 1 in 3 households in the U.S. is **growing food**.
- Children involved in growing vegetables are more **willing to eat** them.

This information was gleaned from a 2021 National Gardening Association study conducted in the U.S.. The trends show a fundamental change in consumer behavior related to the pandemic.

*A Garden Center Magazine study analyzed data from independent garden centers and found there was strong growth in the younger customer demographic. You can read more about **these statistics** at **GARDEN PALS**.*

CHECK US OUT!

Watch this video!

The Recycling Program at Prides Corner Farms - which features the VNLA and its members on the 2021 plastic pot recycling program.
Bring on your pots for 2022!

WATCH HERE.

INSIGHTS ON THE COMING SEASON!

Allan Armitage, a 30 year professor (retired) at the University of Georgia, Dept. of Horticulture and active consultant recently shared his insights on the upcoming season in *Greenhouse Grower Magazine*:
"Admidst Change, Opportunities are Opening for Greenhouse Growers".

You can read the short article **HERE**.

The Peat Moss Dilemma

Environmental leaders are sounding the alarm about why gardeners should stop using peat moss because of the consequences to peatland habitats that continued peat harvests will bring. You can read more in this recent **New York Times article**.



Gravel Beds: An Exciting New Chapter in VT's History of Successful Tree Growing Methods

By: David Fried, Elmore Roots Fruit Tree Nursery

As a small-scale organic tree nursery operating in Northern Vermont since the 1980's, Elmore Roots is always in search of innovative ways to improve our nursery practices in order to provide healthier trees and bushes as well as to decrease our labor and costs. A few years ago we came across information about a gravel bed system being developed in Missouri that piqued our interest, and we knew we wanted to give it a try. That was in 2019 and today, after three years of experimenting with growing our stock in gravel beds, we'd like to share our experiences so that you might learn more about this innovation and perhaps consider incorporating it into your operations.

Our initial goals were a little like a fantasy novel. We had learned that farmers in Missouri and Minnesota were finding many advantages in growing trees in gravel beds instead of in pots or in the earth. We thought, "Wow, this could save a lot of digging in the mud in spring, addressing too fast leaf-out times that are a transplanting limitation, and be earth friendly because we could buy and use less pots, and we could eliminate the cost and time of buying pot filling mix and potting them up!" Utilizing gravel beds would also have the added benefit of reducing the wear and tear on our bodies while improving crew morale by not having to lug all these trees around, particularly when they are heavy with rain and irrigation water. Perhaps the most hopeful thing of all was that these trees could be moved bareroot in summer, in full leaf, without wilting! A nearly impossible task when transplanting leafed out trees directly from the ground.



Above: David Fried holding up a bare root tree.
Below: Ari and Anika working on a gravel bed.



I felt a little like Daniel Boone or Johnny Appleseed pioneering a new cutting edge nursery innovation and answering the question, could this new method of growing trees work even in Elmore, Vermont where it gets down to 43 below zero? I wrote to a couple of growers and they assured me this was possible so we proceeded to try.

In 2019 we built and planted a small experimental gravel bed at Elmore Roots. We built the frame using hemlock 2x10s, stacked two high and filled the frame with a lot of pea stone, shoveled in by hand and by tractor bucket. We planted rows of ten bare root trees, just far enough apart so that we could walk through. We wanted to fit in as many trees as we could and originally thought we would be "pulling them up" in a few months after they had grown large and fluffy

roots. We set up a timer and short sprayers in drip lines that successfully kept the roots moist but the leaves dry.

Our first transplanted trees in 2019 out of the gravel beds were a pear in July and then a peach in August. We were impressed by the fluffy mass of new fine roots that had grown in just three months in the gravel. Both trees looked great at first but we left them in the sun, with the roots wrapped in plastic for a day, just to see how tough they really were. The next day they looked good. The pear tree

was planted and cared for in our pear orchard. Within a few days all the leaves had turned black, which was concerning. However, the next spring the pear had recovered and looked healthy.



In late August we transplanted another pear from the gravel bed to our orchard. This pear tree did not wilt at all and continues to grow well and should make fruit this season. As we embarked on this experiment and were planting our gravel bed rows, we originally assumed that the trees would only stay there for a few short months. However, our original gravel bed still has trees in it from the first planting. They look healthy even three years later! We take them out as we need

them, with a round shovel and being careful not to break the roots as we pull them out. We will probably dig the remaining trees out this spring or summer and line out new ones.

Feeling that our experiment with gravel beds had been a success we decided to expand our use of this planting method. In 2020 we submitted a proposal to the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets Specialty Crop Block Grant program to support our effort to build more gravel beds. We were awarded the grant and with that funding we were able to build ten new 16 foot by 16 foot beds. The beds were completed in the Fall of 2020 and were planted with trees in April of 2021. The trees love it in there. They look very healthy and they easily get all the water they need and have excellent drainage around their roots. The planting went very quickly and there is no mowing, no weeding, no staking and no insects or disease noticed on any of the trees to date.

We discovered another bonus to gravel beds in late summer 2021; bare root raspberries and asparagus plants that we did not sell and were about to toss would thrive after we planted them in an open spot in the gravel bed. The asparagus grew beautifully and the raspberries produced fruit a few weeks later! They were the healthiest looking raspberries on the farm. To test tree transplantability in full leaf we moved some large plum trees on the hottest day of summer. 3 of 6 wilted and 3 did not wilt at all. A few weeks later they were all looking so good again.

With our experiences in building and utilizing our expanded gravel bed system under our belts, I contacted a grower in New York who only grows in gravel beds. He shared with me some

important innovations that he made in his operation that we will be able to incorporate into our operations moving forward. These include feeding the gravel bed trees with liquid fertilizer, aiming for a late August/ early September digging date and using smarter tools to dig up the roots carefully. At Elmore Roots we have been working for 42 years to grow great fruit and nut trees and berry plants for our customers. As we get older, we are looking for ways to keep working but not

get hurt and decrease worker fatigue. The lighter weight of these trees goes a long way to achieving this goal of making it easier for our crew and also for our customers. A tree that we were moving around at 70 pounds in a pot, we are now moving around at 20 pounds!

A few initial takeaways from our gravel bed experiences include:

- We are seeing healthy, awesome plants with bushy root systems in a much shorter amount of time!
- These gravel bed trees are much more user friendly.
- You can fit a lot more trees in a car for a customer or in a truck for a planting job or delivery.
- Utilizing gravel beds has a lot of potential to add to what we do in Vermont as

growers and mentors of our customers.

- And gravel beds have the advantage of being friendlier to the land itself since we are using a lot less plastic pots and ground cloth. Because they're not growing in pots, the roots do not get circled and bound up in the pot.

This 2022 season we will be continuing to monitor and experiment with gravel beds as well as taking all we've learned so far to develop best practices. We will be selling trees right out of our gravel beds to customers. We will be using liquid sea/ fish fertilizer to grow thicker bushier roots faster. We will be experimenting with different tools for digging the roots up carefully. This may include broadforks, custom built tractor attachments, or King of Spades long headed models. We will be coaching our customers to see the advantages of purchasing our gravel bed trees and the importance of keeping them shaded and cool until planting. We will be learning all we can along the way to shore up their success.



Anika holding up a leafed out tree.



As part of Elmore Roots' mission and philosophy we will also be disseminating our experiences with gravel beds by hosting workshops and presentations this summer. We hope that more Vermont growers might consider adopting this innovative growing method. We've been thrilled with the results from our gravel beds so far and want to support neighboring farms and nurseries in creating their own. We would be interested in hearing about your interest in this growing method and whether utilizing gravel beds is something you would consider adding to your operations.

We'd love to hear from you and have developed a very short survey for you to provide your feedback and thoughts after reading about our gravel bed successes. **Please click [HERE](#)** to fill out our short survey. Thank you for taking the time to fill it out.

About the Author: David Fried is a certified Vermont horticulturist and founder of Elmore Roots Fruit Tree and Berry Nursery. He is fortunate to be assisted by a very good crew who also are inspired by pioneering new fruit tree discoveries and novel growing methods on a cold hillside in northern Vermont.



elmoreroots.com
fruitpal@elmoreroots.com
802.888.3305

**Specializing in FRUIT trees, BERRY plants, and NUT trees
for Vermont's climate**

*Help your customers by guiding them to a place
where they can see the mature trees growing
and find out what will actually thrive at their
home and in their yard.*

**GREAT selection of PEAR trees, ELDERBERRY and
CURRANT bushes, Northern KIWI vines and
BLACK WALNUT trees**

Three Things to know about Van Berkum Nursery

- 1) We are passionate about what we grow, from New England Woodlanders to Wicked Ruggeds.
- 2) We specialize in healthy NH grown perennials, personal service, and extensive plant knowledge.
- 3) We have friends in low places. (ribbit).



Van Berkum Nursery • 4 James Road Deerfield, NH 03037
(603) 463-7663 Fax 7326 • salesdesk@vanberkumnursery.com
www.vanberkumnursery.com



STRICTLY BUSINESS

no kidding ...

Building Strategic Relationships

by Jacki Hart

In January, I presented a couple of virtual seminars at Congress Conference Redefined... one of which seemed to strike a surprising response in terms of participant engagement, curiosity and gratitude for the ideas I presented.

I thought that my readers here would like to learn the highlights too. Reading a 1,000 word column isn't quite the same impact as a 55 minute live presentation... but let me give you the 'coles notes'.

In my opinion, relationships can either help to make your business stronger, or they can break it. A few key, solid, well timed relationships can launch your business into its next level. And they can be your steady bread and butter. They can provide insight and creativity to innovate, pivot, and re-invent. They can challenge your status quo – pushing you to stretch your talent and beliefs. Without them, you'll be paddling up stream – doing the heavy lifting yourself to keep your business moving forward, one inch at a time.

So, how do you go about improving the quality and quantity of relationships?

How do you prioritize decisions as to what relationships to nurture and abandon?

Try these THREE STEPS to focus your energy and launch your relationship results:

STEP 1:

Be intentional as to where you spend your time relative to developing important relationships in your business – suppliers, customers, advocates, community partners, allied trades, etc. Consider these three categories:

RETURN ON TIME INVESTED – R.O.T.I.

This is the return to you for your time invested in the business. It could be salary, commission, dividend, bonus, profit, new skills/training etc.

POTENTIAL RETURN ON TIME INVESTED - P.R.O.T.I.

This is the return to the business on the time you spend outside of your 'work tasks'. For example, networking at a local business group event, working on new offering/market share, peer groups, online communities etc.



RETURN ON RELATIONSHIPS – R.O.R.

This is the returned intrinsic value to the business from relationships developed with suppliers, employees, colleagues, competitors, customers, community influencers. It's your Word Of Mouth Referral Base.

By taking stock of the activities you do which directly and indirectly support relationships, you're going to be equipped to develop the key relationships your business needs to thrive.

STEP 2:

Build relationships strategically, both inside and outside of your business. The diagram on the next page is a portion of a Business Roadmap that I developed in my coaching tool box. In this segment of the Roadmap®, I'm illustrating how the dynamics between your company's 'internal' brand and 'external' brand are both separate and connected. Staff and customer experience both form the foundation which drives the steps above each. If you're missing one of the levels, everything above it won't be sustainable. Start from the bottom and work upwards – each level is a driver for the level above it.

This is where the heart-beat of the company dwells.

It's where the experience that people have of the business, both inside and outside, translates into delight, engagement and success.

I often think back to this quote from Simon Sinek: "Customers will never love your company until the employees love it first."



This is about recognizing when the emphasis of your focus needs to be on building relationships with your employees and when you need to shift that focus on building relationships with customers and others. While it's true that all relationships need to be nurtured constantly, there are times in the growth and development of every business when attention must shift to respond to the every-changing dynamics of the business cycle. And, relationships need to be built strategically, and through a progression of layered steps.

STEP 3:

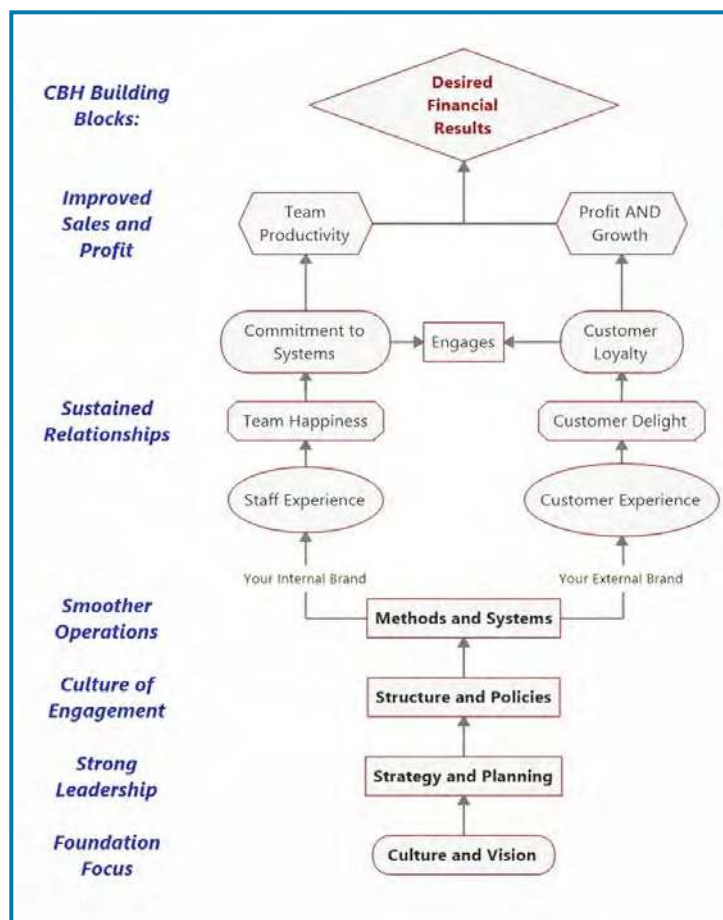
The opportunities to build better relationships in your business run both broad and deep. How often do you make the time to assess how consistently your team is managing the relationships across your business?

For example, do you have a 'cooling off' policy for staff to follow before responding to a text or email into which staff may have read 'tone' and might respond inappropriately? Is there a standard sign-off, signature, greeting, firm hand shake (whenever that will be allowed again...) etc.

What inspired me to focus on this, was a combination of horrific realizations that at times and in different ways, my staff were unintentionally misaligned with my company brand image and the clientele with whom we provided our services.... Who primarily were wealthy cottagers in the Muskoka region.

There were little signs, here and there, and I felt that I always had to 'script' what staff would say to a customer or supplier.... To put my words and intention in their mouth so that the right sentiment, professionalism and ethic came across consistently. Ok, so I was a bit anal about my brand, but it paid off big time in loyal customers, referrals, aligned trades, helpful suppliers etc.

I thought 'common sense' would direct staff toward 'aligned' behaviour. Boy, was I wrong. What it boils down to is this: **Common Sense = Information + Experience.** That's it. Period.



I decided to create a list of every opportunity our team had to 'make an impression', and I put guidelines and processes in place for each one.

I came up with a list of over 50 touch-points in my business on any given day... How many can you list?

I covered the areas of Website, Social Media Channels, The Office phone/voice mail protocols, cell phone voice mail, Office visitors, Facility appearance, security, signage, visitor experience, Staff conduct off-site, Print media, public media, emails/contracts/correspondence, Interviewing, Hiring, Community, and Networking.

The Touchpoint List and the resulting processes/protocols helped to guide my team to act

and think in a way that was aligned with my brand consistently – with each other, with customers, suppliers and potential customers who saw our trucks and brand out in the community.

As you head boldly into this new year and upcoming season, I invite you to pause and think about your relationship building strategy – to support and launch your business to its' next level this year!

About the Author: Jacki Hart is president of Consulting by Hart in Ontario, Canada. She is an entrepreneur, advisor, business consultant, and workshop facilitator with a career in the Green Industry spanning 35 years. Jacki is one of Canada's first women to hold the North American Green Industry certificate for business management excellence. Jacki also manages the Prosperity Program and Peer to Peer Network for Landscape Ontario.



Jacki writes for other trade magazines and will be a regular contributor to our business column. CBH is a consulting firm that "passionately believes that entrepreneurial success depends on sustained forward momentum - across all areas of business - both the visible and the invisible. To learn more about CBH visit www.consultingbyhart.com.





NEW Member Profile: Standing Stone, LLC owner Brian Post

Standing Stone LLC is a landscape design/build company with a focus on traditional stonework based in Springfield VT. We specialize in dry stone walls and features. For select projects, additional services include landscape architecture, full landscape construction, masonry restoration, and gravestone restoration.

Brian started building walls at age 10 at his family home in Barnard, VT. Since then he has continued working with stone whenever possible. In 2006 he graduated with a bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

As part of his studies, he spent 4 months in England, Scotland, and Wales working with several wallers including several Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain (DSWA-GB) Master Craftsmen, Andrew Loudon and Sean Adcock.

Brian gained his own Master Craftsman Certificate from the DSWA-GB, in 2016. He is one of eight people in the USA to hold this highest level of certification. Additionally he is a DSWA-GB Certified Instructor and Examiner. Brian is also a Licensed Landscape Architect in



the State of Vermont. Brian regularly works both in the design studio and in the field.

Brian started his own business, originally called Standing Stone Landscape Architecture in 2010. Over time, Brian has begun to shift the projects he takes on toward those with the complex stonework needs he specializes in. As landscape architecture began to take a smaller role, and stonework became the principle focus, the business was renamed Standing Stone LLC in 2019.

In addition to his own business, Brian has also been heavily involved with The Stone Trust, a Dummerston VT based non-profit organization with a mission to preserve and advance the art and craft of dry stone walling. Since 2012, Brian has served as a Board Member, President, Executive Director, and Director of Education and Training. He was instrumental to the success and growth of the organization. Since Brian has been involved The

Stone Trust, it has grown from offering 2 workshops a year, to now more than 80 planned for 2022 across 6 states. The Stone Trust has made professional dry stone wall training and certification accessible and there is now an ever-growing body of skilled wallers throughout New England and beyond.



In the future, Brian's focus is to continue to take on projects that will have a positive impact on the field of dry stone walling. In the future the hope is to be able to take on more public work, as well as the restoration and repair of dry stone historic infrastructure that still supports our roads, railways, bridges, and buildings. In addition projects that allow for artistic expression when working with stone are always a priority. Standing Stone LLC was just awarded the contract for a major amount of repairs and restoration at Opus 40 in Saugerties NY. So this will be a focus for the next 3 years.

Brian has been aware of VNLA/Green Works for many years, participating in a build at the Flower Show with Dan Snow many years ago and even speaking at one of the annual meetings a few years ago. Supporting professional organizations is important for everyone in the industry and related industries and becoming a member has been on the to do list for several years.

When not working, Brian is an avid vegetable gardener and enjoys skiing, biking, and spending time with his family.



The Vermont Small Business Development Center (VtSBDC) offers no-cost expert assistance to small business owners and entrepreneurs.

Are you ready to start or grow your business? They can help. Since 1992, the Vermont Small Business Development Center (VtSBDC) has provided no-cost professional expertise and guidance to hundreds of business owners. They combine one-on-one confidential advising with training programs to give their clients the tools and insight they

need to reach their business goals.

They have celebrated many successes with clients at all stages of business development. VtSBDC advisors offer a large toolbox full of helpful business resources which include help with:

- business planning
- start-up
- financials
- human resources
- disaster recovery
- business transition



- product development
- marketing & sales
- management & operations
- and more business resources

VtSBDC is celebrating 30 years of advising VT business owners. To learn more visit www.vtsbdc.org.



THE PLANT LOUNGE

wiry stems, hairy leaves and bodacious blooms. . .

Philadelphus coronarius 'E.A. Bowles' or 'Variegatus'

by Mark Dwyer, Landscape Prescriptions by MD

In my 21 years as Director of Horticulture at Rotary Botanical Gardens (Janesville, WI), few shrubs attracted as much attention as our variegated mock orange. Before it had a label, there were countless inquiries and “What IS that!?” was commonly heard throughout the growing season. This is a special shrub and one of my personal favorites. Unfortunately, availability has been a consistent challenge.

Mock orange, a multi-stemmed shrub in the Hydrangeaceae family has a long history in garden. This species (native to southern Europe) features abundant clusters of cup-shaped, 4-petaled white flowers in late spring that offer an extended radius of powerful, sweet fragrance for about two weeks. Variegated mock orange cultivars of this species have the added interest of white and cream, irregular edges and margins on the medium green foliage. The varieties 'E. A. Bowles' ('Bowles Variety') and 'Variegatus' are identical and offer significant foliage impact for the entire growing season. The relatively new Icelandic™ ('Icezam') selection is slightly more compact, rounded and has a bit narrower variegation which is still quite striking.

The selection 'E.A. Bowles' is typically listed as maturing to 6' or so in time although I found ours to top out closer to 8' with a slightly narrower width to the naturally



Philadelphus 'E.A. Bowles'

ascending but arching form. They easily tolerate full sun to very light shade. *Philadelphus*, in general, will grow in average to heavier soils although organically rich and well-drained situations are most preferred. Rarely bothered by diseases, insects or deer, mock oranges may occasionally exhibit leaf spot, canker, powdery mildew and rust. Mock orange should be pruned after flowering, as it blooms on old wood. Rejuvenating the shrub by removing older canes or the rare, severe cutback will result in renewed vigor although flowering the next season may be compromised. These selections are all cutting propagated.

Why Grow *Philadelphus coronarius* 'E.A. Bowles' ('Variegatus')?

- Very fragrant flowers
- Elegant variegation on foliage
- Medium-sized specimen shrub
- Rich in nectar for bees and butterflies
- Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society

Specifics:

Name: *Philadelphus coronarius* 'E.A. Bowles' or 'Variegatus'

Common Name: variegated mock orange

Description: The medium green leaves on this lightly arching shrub feature irregular, but conspicuous, creamy white borders. The fragrant



white blooms in late spring to early summer are a welcome addition to the garden as well.

Hardiness: USDA Hardiness z 4-8

In the Landscape: Position this specimen shrub where the scent can be enjoyed. Pair the darker foliage of neighboring plants in proximity to play off the light, variegated foliage.

Reprinted with permission from Nursery Management Magazine.



About the Author:

MARK DWYER is currently the Garden Manager for the Edgerton (WI) Hospital Healing Garden after 21 years as Director of Horticulture at Rotary Botanical Gardens (Janesville, WI). He also operates Landscape Prescriptions by MD, a landscape design and consultation business. mcdwyer@zoho.com Visit: www.landscapeprescriptionsmd.com.



Wholesale Horticultural Distribution Centers

• Quality Plant Material • Complete Selection of Hardgoods • Stone Products
Landscape Lighting • Ice Melt & Calcium Chloride • Spyder Delivery • Competitive Pricing

2234 N Hartland Rd. PO Box 1048, White River Jct., VT

Phone: (802) 295-2117 Fax: (802) 295-4889

Proud Member of VNLA

www.northernnurseries.com

Manager: Mike Trombly





The Vermont Nursery & Landscape Association mission is to support and strengthen the horticulture industry of Vermont by creating greater awareness of the benefits of landscaping and promoting the professional services and products of our members.

visit us at www.vnlavt.org