

# THE DIRT

Summer Issue 2023, Volume 49, Issue 2



Change is Upon us page 4

News from the VT Agency of Ag page 21

The Plant Lounge page 28

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## PRESIDENT

**Gabriel Bushey**  
**Crafted Landscapes, LLC**  
176 South Maple Street  
Vergennes, VT 05491  
802-233-8551  
info@craftedland.com

## VICE-PRESIDENT

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

## SECRETARY/TREASURER

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

## DIRECTORS

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

**Marijke Niles**  
**Marijke's Perennial Gardens Plus**  
1299 Robert Young Road  
Starksboro, VT 05487  
802-453-7590  
marijke.niles@gmail.com

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

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

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

**Annie White**  
**Nectar Landscape Design Studio**  
**UVM Lecturer Agroecology**  
PO Box 3773  
Stowe, VT 05672  
802-777-1350  
annie@nectarvt.com  
Annie.White@uvm.edu

## 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@vnlavt.org  
www.vnlavt.org

## COMMITTEES

**BUDGET AND FINANCE**  
**COMMITTEE CHAIR**  
Bruce Gagne - Gagne Insurance Agency

**EVALUATION & PLANNING**  
**COMMITTEE CHAIR**  
Gabe Bushey - Crafted Landscapes, LLC

**INDUSTRY AWARDS COMMITTEE CHAIR**  
Ashley Robinson, Landscape Designer

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**  
Ralph Fitz-Gerald - Horsford Gardens & Nursery

**MARKETING & EDUCATION**  
**COMMITTEE CHAIR**  
Gabe Bushey - Crafted Landscapes, LLC

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR**  
Aaron Smith, S & D Landscapes, LLC

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

**RESEARCH & AWARDS**  
Linzy Vos

**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

## Hello VNLA Members, Friends and Colleagues,

Before I talk about this season and how it is going, I want to reflect for a moment. Looking back at the attendance for the winter meeting and looking at what an amazing success the Flower Show was, I am truly impressed and grateful for the incredible membership we have in the organization. Thank you all for your efforts. We have some great volunteer projects and a great lineup of programming including twilights and the summer meeting. I encourage all of you to attend as much as you can.



The consistent theme I have heard from everyone this season is how busy they are. This is, of course, great in many ways. It's a good indication that the economy is still strong in Vermont and that people are still investing in their properties. I do, however, worry a bit that with the lack of good help available as of late, we may all be working ourselves a little too hard. I know I feel like I have late season fatigue even though it is early July at time of writing this letter. Please try to find time to rest and enjoy the fun parts of summer with family and friends.

I have also had a few other observations this season. For one, more customers are interested in evolving their landscapes with more edibles, intelligent design, and less yard space with more natural options. That is a trend I expect we will see more of. It also seems as though it gets hotter earlier each year as climate change continues to affect us. Both trends will be challenges and opportunities moving forward. Our customers will need us in more and different ways than in the past. We will all adapt, as we have been, to continue to provide services and materials required in this changing business and environment. Thank you all for your continued support of the VNLA. I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at the summer meeting next month.

In solidarity,

Gabriel Bushey



P.S. I originally wrote this letter a few days before the flooding that so much of the State experienced. What a truly scary and devastating event for so many people. I'm sure a lot of you are digging out and assessing the damage as I am writing this addendum. In my area we are very lucky but others will need assistance in many ways. I am sure we as an organization will also be taking stock in who has been impacted and how we may be able to come together to help. Please do not hesitate to reach out in any way if we put together a team of volunteers to help in any way.

## inside this issue

Board of Directors	2
The President's Letter	3
The Buzz	
<i>Change is Upon Us!</i>	4
<i>VNLA Summer Meeting &amp; Trade Show</i>	
<i>Vermonters are Remarkable!</i>	5
<i>VT Blooms Initiative's 1st Project of the Season</i>	7
<i>VNLA Updates</i>	10
<i>VNLA Summer Twilight Gatherings</i>	12
<i>VNLA Welcomes New Member</i>	14
<i>Calendar of Events</i>	15
Leonard's Clippings	16
The Lab	19
<i>Observations from the UVM Diagnostic Lab</i>	
<i>News from the VT Agency of Agriculture Foods &amp; Markets</i>	21
The Idea Factory	24
<i>American Hort Cultivate '23 State of the Industry Address</i>	
<i>Industry Podcasts to Check Out!</i>	
Strictly Business	25
<i>Part 1: Paying a Living Wage vs. Minimum Wage</i>	
<i>Part 2: Balancing 'Lifestyle' with Work</i>	
The Plant Lounge	28
<i>Acer japonica 'Aconitifolium'</i>	

**Cover Photo Credit:**  
**Kristina MacKulin**



# THE BUZZ

*the low down on what's up!*

## Change is Upon Us!

by Gabe Bushey

It is very bittersweet to be the one to announce that at the end of this year Kristina MacKulin will be stepping down from her role as Executive Director of the Vermont Nursery and Landscape Association. She has held this position for 20 years. Kristina originally gave the board her notice at the end of 2019 indicating she would stay through 2021 and work on one last flower show. Well let's just say the pandemic changed everything for so many of us.

In a way I'm honored to be the person in this position. Kristina has been the rock of the organization for as long as most of us can remember. Coming off of the unprecedented success of the 2023 Vermont Flower Show, it is clearer than ever how much she has poured into this association and how she is more responsible than anyone for its stability. We have a large void to

fill and will be looking for input and guidance throughout the process. The board has formed a committee to conduct the job search and has met several times. We welcome any advice or suggestions and perhaps you even know of a possible candidate.

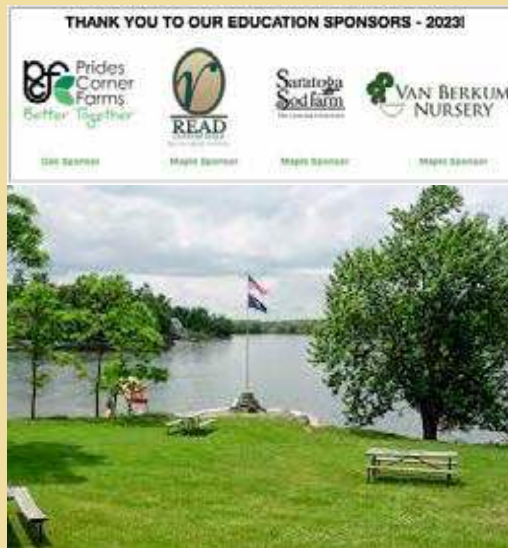
Kristina has taken on more and more as the years have progressed to the point where we can't expect all of the same things from someone new to the position. We will be asking for help filling in some of the gaps moving forward. Let's hope we can find someone to take on the work for another 20 years! That may not be realistic but we hope to have a good process in place to hire and train in the future as well. Please feel free to talk with any of us on the board or with Kristina herself. We owe her a lot of gratitude and although I'm sure she won't be fully gone we will all miss her consistent, professional efforts. She always goes above and beyond.

## VNLA Summer Meeting & Trade Show

August 17, 2023

Please join us on **August 17, 2023** from 9am - 5:00 pm at Kingsland Bay State Park on the shores of Lake Champlain. We will gather in the Banquet Hall, Theatre Building and on the grounds. There will be time throughout the day to visit with vendors.

Our **keynote speaker** is **Tom Rogers** from The Nature Conservancy. Tom will be speaking about climate change in Vermont. We will also have presentations from **Annie White**, owner of Nectar Landscape Design Studio and UVM lecturer and from **Elise Schadler**, the VT Urban & Community Forestry Program Manager. We will be holding a special membership meeting at 11:30 am. You can read the notice [HERE](#).



To wrap up the day we will be holding our annual **Summer Auction**. Please consider bringing a donation! From 4:30-5:30 please join us for **The After Party!** Stay for a swim, some drinks (BYOB), some snacks and lawn games which we will provide.

**A big thank you to our 2023 Education Sponsors:** Prides Corner Farms, Read Custom Soils, Saratoga Sod Farm, and Van Berkum Nursery. We are grateful for their support!

[READ MORE ABOUT THE DAY'S EVENTS HERE.](#)

[ATTENDEES REGISTER HERE.](#)

[EXHIBITORS REGISTER HERE.](#)



# Vermonters are Remarkable!

by Kristina MacKulin

It has been a daunting two weeks since the flooding came to Vermont and somehow did more damage than Hurricane Irene in some areas and less in others. While we were all holding our breath on Monday, July 10 we certainly woke up to bear witness to so many towns, cities, homes, farms, and businesses devastated by the 9+ inches of rain that fell. And then it just kept coming!

Governor Scott was quick to act and thanks to him and our VT Congressional delegation, President Biden signed a **Major Disaster Declaration** for VT very quickly. This federal assistance will go to individuals, businesses and farms and under this declaration, the U.S. Small Business Administration will be giving out low-interest disaster loans to eligible homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and certain non-profits. You can learn more about eligibility [HERE](#). FEMA has been on the ground, assessing damages and people have already begun to receive funds.

Vermonters of all ages have stepped up to the plate and mobilized as the recovery process began and continues to be underway. We know of some VNLA members who came to their employees' aid when the flooding hit. It has been heartwarming to see neighbors building bridges together, strangers picking up debris off of peoples' lawns, and local restaurants bringing their food trucks to towns to feed people that have lost their homes. The work has just begun.

Here at the VNLA we have been sharing information with the membership on resources available if your home, business, or farm has been damaged in any way. If you are in need of a "work party" please do not hesitate to reach out and we can call on our members to come help.

I want to share information about the recovery process that is coming across my desk daily. There are already reports of scams throughout the state. It is important to stay alert and use reliable sources when it comes to recovery aid that is being offered.

**Step 1** is to report any damages to 2-1-1 and document and photograph all damage. You can submit the damages [HERE](#). **Eligibility is available for the following counties:**



Chittenden, Lamoille, Rutland, Washington, Windham, and Windsor are eligible for BOTH Physical Disaster Damage Loans (which cover businesses, homeowners, and renters) as well as Economic Injury Disaster Loans. Addison, Bennington, Caledonia, Franklin, Grand Isle, Orange, and Orleans Counties, as of now, are ONLY eligible for

Economic Injury Disaster Loans. The **deadline** to file for **Physical Disaster Damage Loans** is **September 12, 2023**. The **deadline** for **Economic Injury Disaster Loans** is **April 15, 2024**. You can reach out to a **Recovery Center** to discuss loans and eligibility. You can find a recovery center near you by visiting this **Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development** link [HERE](#), which is the ACCD's **Severe Storm Recovery Resource Center** page. This resource page also provides guidance and flood disaster procedures for other state agencies and partners, how to sign up to volunteer, how to donate to the storm recovery efforts and how to sign up for the severe storm recovery newsletter. You can also contact the **VT Small Business Development Center** to think through recovery options [HERE](#).

**Aid for Farmers and Agricultural Businesses:** The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering disaster assistance to those affected by the flooding. You can find your local service center [HERE](#) and for more information on disaster assistance for crop loss visit [HERE](#). The **VT Agency of Agriculture** also has farm related assistance and you can learn more [HERE](#). This resource page has information on how to report losses, recovery donation opportunities, guidance for dairy, crop, nursery, produce, and livestock farmers.

**Another Way to Help:** The **Capstone Community Action Group**, a Barre based anti-poverty non-profit, has launched the **Vermont Main Street Flood Recovery Fund**, which is the only small business grant pool available to Vermont business owners. Check out their Flood Relief Resource page and how to donate [HERE](#).

And once again, if you have been affected by the flooding and could use a "work crew" to help please contact us at [kristina@vnlavt.org](mailto:kristina@vnlavt.org).



# Equipment & Tools for Landscape Professionals

Sprayers • Rakes • Loppers & Pruners • Saws & Extensions • Ladders • & More



Supplying Growers, Gardeners  
**OESCO INC.**<sup>TM</sup>  
and Groundskeeping Professionals. Since 1954.  
**800-634-5557** [www.oescoinc.com](http://www.oescoinc.com)  
8 Ashfield Rd./Rt. 116, P.O. Box 540 Conway, MA 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](mailto:cobcreek@gmavt.net)



# The VT Blooms Initiative's 1st Project of the Season!

by Kristina MacKulin

The VNLA launched the **Vermont Blooms Initiative** in the **Fall of 2020**. It is a planting program dedicated to enhancing Vermonters health by improving and beautifying our civic landscapes. This all-volunteer endeavor is led by the VNLA's Volunteer Project Outreach Committee (VPOC) and is funded by donations from our VNLA members and associates. Past projects have included plantings at the Ronald McDonald House in Burlington, street planting in the City of Vergennes, and planting projects at the Jeffersonville Family Housing at Mann's Meadow, Vergennes Union Elementary School, and the Platt Memorial Library. You can see slideshows of those volunteer projects [HERE](#).



## THANK YOU TO THE VOLUNTEERS!

- \* Kim Brockway & Family, CP Smith Elementary School
- \* Lenore Budd
- \* Robin Collins, Champlain College
- \* Ralph Fitz-Gerald, Horsford Gardens & Nursery
- \* Holly Greenleaf, Greenleaf Design
- \* Silvia Jope, Old World Garden Design
- \* Jesse Labrecque, J. Labrecque LLC
- \* Kelsey McWilliams, Point of Shift
- \* Ashley Robinson, Landscape Designer
- \* Jill Sarazen, Lake Champlain Sea Grant & VTDEC
- \* Micayla Schambura, UVM Grad Student
- \* Morgan Thibodeau, Graphic Designer
- \* Linzy Vos, Rocky Dale Gardens



## THANK YOU TO THE DONORS!

- \* Evergreen Gardens - perennials
- \* Gardener's Supply Company - \$150 gift card for supplies
- \* Greenhaven Gardens & Nursery - shrubs
- \* Horsford Gardens & Nursery - shrubs
- \* Full Circle Gardens - perennials
- \* J. Labrecque Excavation & Land Management - 3 yds of stone; 1 yd of river stone
- \* Landshapes - 19 stepping stone
- \* Kristina MacKulin - 3 yds compost
- \* Rocky Dale Gardens - perennials
- \* Van Berkum Nursery - perennials

On **July 8, 2023** the Committee, led by Holly Greenleaf of Greenleaf Designs, descended upon CP Smith Elementary School located on Ethan Allen Parkway in Burlington to install a rain garden. VPOC worked on this project with support from Champlain College students and the Lake Champlain Basin Program which provided an outreach grant to support the project. The installation of the rain garden could not have been more timely with the amount of rain Burlington has seen in recent days.

This project could not have happened without the generous donations our members provided as well as the 13 volunteers who gave up a Saturday and volunteered on July 8 to install the rain garden. We would like to thank the following people:

Please enjoy a few more photos of the project on the following page.

There are more projects in the works for later on in the year as well as a fall project planned for another Habitat for Humanity of Addison County build that is almost complete in Booth Woods located in Vergennes, VT.



If you have a project in your town that you would like the Volunteer Project Outreach Committee please reach out to Ashley Robinson, the chair at [arobinsonld@gmail.com](mailto:arobinsonld@gmail.com).



Group photo from left to right: Morgan Thibodeau, Robin Collins, Holly Greenleaf, Linzy Vos, Jill Sarazen, Micayla Schambura, and Jesse Labrecque.

**SAVE THE DATE  
THE VNLA WINTER  
MEETING & TRADE  
SHOW**

**FEBRUARY 15, 2024  
@ UVM DAVIS  
CENTER,  
BURLINGTON, VT**

## — We're All About Community —



Over the last 4 years our members have jumped in to partner with Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity building vegetable gardens, patios, and sustainable landscapes for their projects. We also sponsor the Vermont Blooms Initiative, a VNLA endeavor that completes small volunteer projects around the State to beautify public outdoor spaces. Please visit our website to find out more.

The Vermont Nursery and Landscape Association – visit us at [VNLAVT.org](http://VNLAVT.org)



**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



**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



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

**WHAT WE OFFER. . .**

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



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

**Lang • McLaughry • Commercial**

**Let us be your guide!**  
**603.298.8904 | Office**

**2021 RETAILER OF THE YEAR AWARD**  
 (VT Nursery & Landscaping Assoc.)



**For Sale!**

**JM LANDSCAPING & GARDEN CENTER**

**757 LOWER PLAIN ROAD  
 ROUTE 5 —BRADFORD, VT 05033**

Well established garden center & landscaping business located on busy Route 5 (Lower Plain) in Bradford, VT.

- Strong and Loyal Customer Base
- Great Selection of Annuals and Perennials
- 11.8+/- acres along busy Route 5
  - 12,000 + /- cars daily
- Lots of room to expand business

For more information please contact:  
**CAM BROWN | LANG MCLAUGHRY COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE**  
 cam.brown@lmsre.com | 603.252.8902 | www.langmclaughrycommercialrealestate.com

# VNLA Updates

by Kristina MacKulin

## VERMONT BLOOMS PASSPORT PROGRAM/EVENT

People are continuing to seek out this event and to-date we have 97 people who have signed up and two participants that have completed all the challenges! We have 23 VNLA & VT Vegetable & Berry Grower participating businesses and the Vermont Blooms Passport Program Event has been organized using an Eventzee App. Eventzee is a platform to create mobile scavenger hunt type events. You can see all the details [HERE](#). The program runs through the end of October.



## PLASTIC POT RECYCLING PROGRAM

Email notices were sent to members and the schedule is posted on-line for the drop-off times. We highly encourage all to participate in this program and be a part of this recycling effort! The next scheduled dates for drop-off are as follows:

**August 7 – 11, 2023 (Mon-Fri)** – Gardener’s Supply-Williston, Horsford Gardens & Nursery, Charlotte, Evergreen Gardens of VT, Waterbury.

**August 21 – 25, 2023 (Mon-Fri)** – Greenhaven Gardens & Nursery, New Haven, Glebe Mountain Gardens, S. Londonderry, Gardener’s Supply-Lebanon.

**September 11 – 15, 2023 (Mon – Fri)** – Gardener’s Supply-Williston, Horsford Gardens & Nursery, Charlotte, Evergreen Gardens of VT, Waterbury.

**September 25 – 29, 2023 (Mon-Fri)** – Greenhaven Gardens & Nursery, New Haven, Glebe Mountain Gardens, S. Londonderry, Gardener’s Supply-Lebanon.

You can read about the program [HERE](#).

We were recently contacted by Marie Chieppo of Eco Plants, LLC who published a research report for the Association of



Professional Landscape Designers in 2020 entitled *“Plastic Pots and the Green Industry: Production, Use, Disposal and Environmental Impacts”*. She wanted to learn more about our efforts in hopes of growing this recycling effort nationally. Marie recently spoke at Cultivate ’23, the 4 day conference hosted by AmericanHort in Ohio on this subject.

Marie also recently shared an article published in *The American Gardener Magazine*, July/August 2023 issue entitled *“Kicking the Plastic Pot Habit”* by Gail Hudson. In the article Marie speaks about her efforts and the VNLA is mentioned in the article for our efforts here in Vermont. You can read that article [HERE](#).

We should all be proud of our recycling efforts as an industry so mark your calendars for the next drop off dates!! **This recycling program would not be possible without Prides Corner Farms, Jordan Plastics, and our VNLA drop-off sites!**





# 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

# THINK GREEN BE GREEN



## Recycle Your Nursery Pots with Prides Corner Farms



*Better Together*

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

# VNLA Summer Twilight Gatherings

by Kristina MacKulin

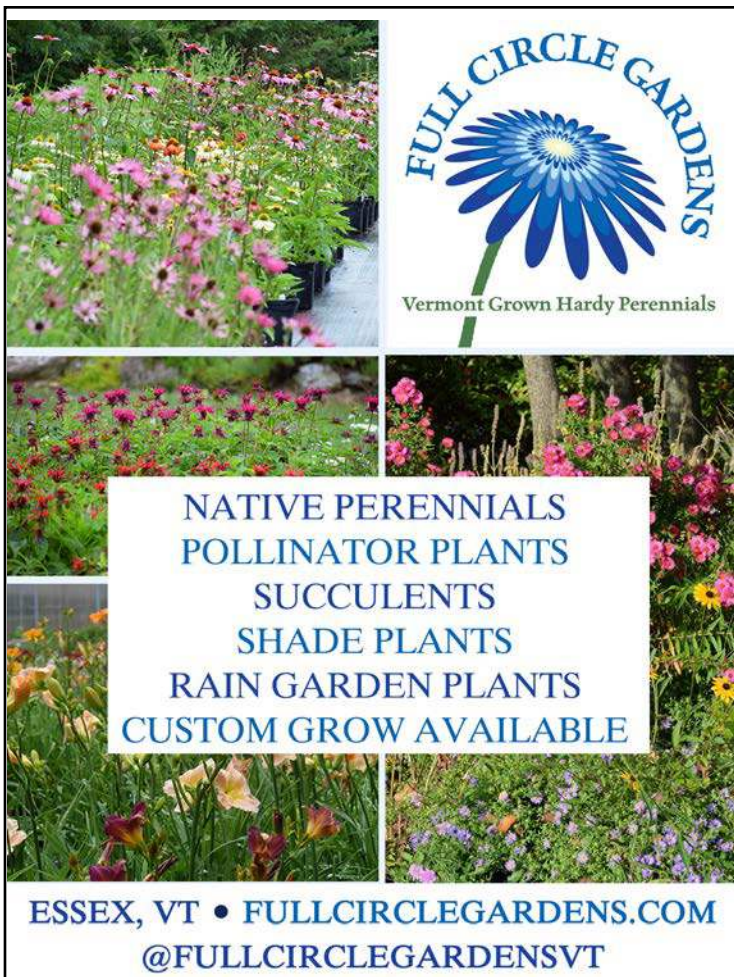
We held our first Summer Twilight Gathering on June 22. It was hosted by Julie Rubaud of Red Wagon Plants (RWP) on a beautiful summer evening and we had approximately 20 people in attendance. Since opening Red Wagon Plants (RWP) in 2005, Julie's mission has been education and access. Garden education remains the core of RWP, from the simple act of encouraging and informing customers to grow food in their own backyards, offering classes and workshops for gardeners looking to learn more, and perhaps most importantly, the training and retention of knowledgeable employees.

Julie spent the evening sharing with the group how RWP operates their



growing and retail operations as well as their shipping of packaged herbs and plants to other retail outlets. They are getting ready to break ground on a new "garden center" facility and increase parking capacity on their site. The group was truly inspired by Julie and her staff's work ethic and dedication to their mission.

Our next Summer Twilight Gathering is coming up on August 3, 2023 at 6pm at Marijke's Perennial Gardens Plus in Starksboro. You can learn more and RSVP [HERE](#). We hope you can join us.



**FULL CIRCLE GARDENS**  
Vermont Grown Hardy Perennials

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

ESSEX, VT • [FULLCIRCLGARDENS.COM](http://FULLCIRCLGARDENS.COM)  
[@FULLCIRCLGARDENSVT](https://twitter.com/FULLCIRCLGARDENSVT)



**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**





# GREEN MOUNTAIN MULCH

we've got you covered... naturally!

- ◆ Only 100% virgin wood materials
- ◆ Artfully blended and ground to produce attractive, fragrant mulch products
- ◆ A variety of species to meet the needs of a wide range of end-users
- ◆ Unsurpassed quality of our all-natural cedar mulch products
- ◆ In bags, bulk, or mixed loads!



Call 1-800-639-4304  
or visit us online at  
[greenmountainmulch.com](http://greenmountainmulch.com)



**HORSFORD**  
Gardens & Nursery  
CHARLOTTE, VERMONT

Your one-stop shop for the most diverse selection of trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals in Vermont. Horsford's has over 40 acres of field and container production dedicated to growing hardy plants that survive Vermont winters.

- **ONLINE CATALOG WITH REAL-TIME INVENTORY**
- **SHOP AT THE NURSERY**
- **ONLINE ORDERING FOR PICKUP**

Commercial pricing is available to approved customers.  
*We consider anyone who sells or installs plants as their primary source of income a potential commercial customer. Contact us for an application.*

**HORSFORDNURSERY.COM** • [orders@horsfordnursery.com](mailto:orders@horsfordnursery.com)

# Welcome to our NEW VNLA Member!

**Kindhearted Gardens**  
**Natasha Horak**  
5441 Pond Road  
Cambridge, VT 05656  
802-556-2745  
[kindheartedgardens@gmail.com](mailto:kindheartedgardens@gmail.com)  
Active Member  
Category: Garden Designer, Landscape  
Gardener, Organic Farm



Vermont Certified Horticulturist Program



Don't delay and order your study manual today!

Exam offered by appointment virtually and in-person.

Learn more about the program [HERE](#).



"For me, being a VCH is an expression of commitment to the field of horticulture. The discipline of maintaining certification ensures that I am current on topics that translate to better landscape design and plant care practices. For my clients, it's another check mark of professionalism."

Joan Lynch, The Inner Garden, Inc.

Find a Vermont Certified Horticulturist Today!  
[vnlavt.org](http://vnlavt.org)



## Participate in the 2023 Industry Awards Program!

It's not too soon to  
start planning for an  
entry!

See past winning  
projects [HERE](#).





# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**August 3, 2023**  
**VNLA Summer Twilight Gathering - 6-7:30pm**  
**Marijke's Perennial Gardens Plus**  
 1299 Robert Young Drive  
 S. Starksboro, VT 05487  
 RSVP [HERE](#).

**August 17, 2023**  
**VNLA Summer Meeting & Trade Show**  
 Kingsland Bay State Park  
 Ferrisburgh, VT 05456  
 Register [HERE](#).

**September 10-13, 2023**  
**NALP's ELEVATE National Conference & Expo**  
 Dallas, TX  
 Learn more [HERE](#)

**September 21 & 28, 2023**  
**9am - 1pm: in-person Ecological Landscape Alliance's Ecological Design Workshop**  
 Westchester County, NY  
 Learn more [HERE](#).

**October 26, 2023**  
**Season's End Summit: In-person**  
**8:30am-5:30 pm**  
 New England Botanic Garden  
 Tower Hill, MA  
 Learn more [HERE](#).

**November 8-9, 2023**  
**Northeast Greenhouse Conference**  
 DoubleTree by Hilton  
 Manchester, NH  
 Learn more [HERE](#).

**November 9, 2023**  
**Ecological Landscape Alliance: Regenerative Solutions for Resilient Landscapes - Hybrid**  
**8:30 am - 4:30 pm**  
 Longwood Gardens, PA  
 Learn more [HERE](#).

**November 27 - December 1, 2023**  
**Irrigation Show & EducationWeek**  
 San Antonio, TX  
 Learn more [HERE](#).

**December 1, 2023**  
**Ecological Landscape Alliance Ecological Plant Conference - Hybrid 8:30am-5:30pm**  
 Location TBD, NY  
 Learn more [HERE](#).

**January 10-12, 2024**  
**MANTS Means Business**  
 Baltimore Convention Center  
 Baltimore, MD  
 Learn more [HERE](#).

**February 15, 2024**  
**VNLA Winter Meeting & Trade Show**  
 UVM Davis Center  
 Burlington, VT 05401  
 Details coming soon.

**MILLICAN NURSERIES LLC.**

**Come see us soon!  
 Providing New England  
 with amazing plants  
 since 1986!**

**www.MNIPLANTS.com**  
**603-435-6660**



# LEONARD'S CLIPPINGS!

by Dr. Leonard Perry, UVM Horticulture Professor Emeritus

Summer, 2023

## In PSS Department and Campus news:



- David Barrington has stepped down as Plant and Soil Science interim Department chair in July to devote full-time to his research and as an advisor to three Ph.D. students. He began his career at UVM in 1974 as director of the Pringle Herbarium. Terry Bradshaw (shown in photo) is the incoming PSS interim chair. In addition to teaching courses on tree fruit production and other areas, he also will continue as director of the UVM Horticulture Research and Education Center in South Burlington.

Formerly, Cornell was the main source of information, as this pest was first seen in this country in 2009 in a home garden in Plattsburgh, NY. Since then, you'll see on the UVM map that this pest is throughout much of VT, northern NY and NH, and parts of Maine. (For some years now, I've had to cover my own garlic with insect screening—tight—to try and avoid damage.)



From Jennifer Duffield White of GreenTalks (Ball Publ.) comes this mention of a study, published last year in *Ecology*, Volume 103, Issue 7 (<https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/19399170/2022/103/7>), on a specific pollinator—**bees**—and a factor affecting their health. “Short, wide flowers (such as black-eyed Susans and purple coneflowers) are more likely to collect bee feces, which can be contaminated with a gut parasite called *Crithidia bombi*. The parasite isn't considered a top cause of bee deaths, but it does make bees doxy and lethargic, which can make gathering food difficult...This could be an interesting change in the way we look at pollinator plantings—not just providing forage but also reducing the risk of parasite transmission...If you're worried about your coneflowers, one of the study's authors, Rebecca Irwin, told *Science News* that when

one of your plants is a high-transmitting species, that it's beneficial to have a diversity of flower types along with it.”

From Jen Polanz of Inside Grower (Ball Publ.) comes this heads up on details from Wageningen University & Research (Netherlands), released last year, on a study showing **pollinators can be impacted by pesticides** not only through pollen and nectar, but through honeydew left behind by pests like aphids, whiteflies and mealybugs...“Beneficial insects such as pollinators and biological pest control agents feed on honeydew when nectar is scarce, which is a common occurrence. If they feed on honeydew, they can be exposed to insecticides...The effects can be deadly.” You can find more in the research article ([www.wur.nl/en.htm](http://www.wur.nl/en.htm)), search for “beneficial insects and pollinators”)



**American Gold Rush Rudbeckia** was selected as the Perennial Plant Association's (PPA) Perennial Plant of the Year for 2023. This Black-eyed Susan produces loads of long-lasting 3-in. flowers atop its compact foliage (reaching just 22 to 27 in. when in full bloom). And with its hairy leaves and stems it doesn't succumb to bacterial and fungal leaf spots as many of the other popular cultivars do. It's cold hardy all the way to Zone 4.



- Even though leek moth is a veggie pest (alliums in particular eg. onions, leeks, garlic), if you grow any of these or advise clients, you can keep up with this pest at a website right from UVM ([www.uvm.edu/extension/leek-moth-information-center](http://www.uvm.edu/extension/leek-moth-information-center)).



Adding to its credibility as a top-notch perennial, American Goldrush was the first winner of All-America Selections (2020) three-year winter trials held in various locations across the country. With these two prestigious awards, and with rudbeckia being the National Garden Bureau's 2023 Perennial of the Year, American Goldrush is receiving tons of promotion and as a result has the honor of being the first "Triple Crown of Horticulture." (info courtesy of Paul Pilon, Perennial Pulse e-newsletter, Ball Publ. and photos courtesy AAS.org).



medicine, and to stop bleeding. The genus name comes from the Latin words for blood (*sanguis*) and to soak up (*sorbeo*).

Leaves of salad and great burnet are used in salads, as you might guess, and have a cucumber-like flavor. Serrated and pinnate, leaves add a nice garden texture, and plants fill among late season perennials like asters, rudbeckia, and asters. Burnets like full sun and moist soils, and are good in rain gardens or swales.

Looking to fill a large shady area? You might consider this hosta (another tip from Paul Pilon). "Empress Wu is definitely worthy of the honor of being **Proven Winners' 2023 Hosta of the Year**. At maturity, it reaches an astounding 5- to 6-ft. spread and reaches 3- to 4-ft. tall. The huge dark green, deeply veined leaves can measure more than 1.5-ft. wide and long. Hardy to Zone 3."



Canadian burnet (*canadensis*) ranges from 3 to 6ft tall, with late season large white bottlebrush flowers 5-inches long. Native to the Northeast and Northwestern states, it provides plenty of much needed pollen for pollinators late in the season. It prefers moist soil, being naturally a wetland plant. Deadheading will keep these more attractive.

'Empress Wu' is part of the Shadowland series of hostas from Proven Winners. It was hybridized and developed by Brian Skaggs and Virginia Skaggs in Lowell, Ind., USA as the result of a selfing of *Hosta* 'Big John' (not patented), and was patented in 2010 (USPP 20,774).



Obviously, the Japanese burnet is not native, but its large, pinnate leaves with toothed leaflets adds texture to borders, the burgundy catkin-like flowers (*tenuifolia*, reddish-pink on *obtusata*) on 3-4ft. stems add color and movement swaying in the late summer garden, and leaves provide orange to yellow fall color.

Of the more than 3,800 hosta cultivars registered with The American Hosta Society, this one is among the (if not the) largest. It has larger leaves and habit than similar hostas 'T Rex', 'Elatior', 'Vim and Vigor', or *montana macrophylla*.

Finally, yet another perennial, one you may not be familiar with—Burnet or *Sanguisorba*. Popular in Europe for some time, this genus native to northern temperate regions is now becoming better known and used in

this country with several selections. Flowers (often wine red to pinkish) are held on wiry stems, and resemble (shape and size depending on species) bottlebrushes, catkins, or an elongated clover flower. Of the three dozen species, most common are the Great Burnet (*officinalis*) and Salad Burnet (*minor*). While the latter may get 1-2ft tall and wide, the great burnet can get up to 3ft tall and wide. Great burnet has many other uses such as the extensive root system for bioremediation and erosion control, extracts from leaves for antioxidants, in traditional Chinese

A hybrid cultivar released this year from Intrinsic Gardens (x 'Plum Drops'—shown above, courtesy

[intrinsicperennialgardens.com](http://intrinsicperennialgardens.com)) has hundreds of small, dense plum-colored flowers from late summer into fall. A recent cultivar of the great burnet (var. *microcephala* 'Little Angel'—shown below, photo courtesy Luc Klinkhamer, Walters Gardens) stays under one foot tall, has green leaves with creamy white margins, and half-inch purple-red flowers in late summer. Of the 26 burnets in trials at the Chicago Botanic Garden by Richard Hawke, 'Little Angel' was rated among the top five.



Give us a call  
for access to  
our 2023  
pricing.

**Spring/Summer Wholesale Hours**

**Weekdays 7am–6pm, Sat. 8am–6pm, Sun. 9am-5pm**

**472 Marshall Avenue, Williston, VT**

**802-658-2433 • [wholesale@gardeners.com](mailto:wholesale@gardeners.com)**



# THE LAB

putting it under the lens . . .



## Spring / Early Summer Updates

by Ann Hazelrigg, Phd, UVM Extension

The season started off with a bang with the frost/freeze damage of May 18 and May 26. Apples and grapes were the main economic crops hit with some growers losing all or most of their crops. Blueberries also suffered in some areas of the state. Vegetable growers and gardeners were unaffected since most transplants don't go out until Memorial Day. I did hear from one nursery/greenhouse operator who has been selling new plants to several new-to-Vermont clients since they had mistakenly put out plants in mid-May only to lose them to the cold snap.

Ornamental trees were also impacted by the low temperatures. Typically, the new succulent growth of trees and shrubs is more vulnerable to the lower temperatures showing symptoms of blackening of leaves, dieback in branch tips, and in wilting in the new growth. The damage was very hit and miss throughout the state and even site to site. I saw leaf damage on birches and chestnuts, yet the crabapples and maples were untouched in the same area. The damage just depended on the species of tree involved, the stage of growth and the microclimate of the site. I received several calls about damaged oaks around the state with growers thinking it was a new emerging disease. The frost damaged newly emerging tender buds causing shriveled and dead new growth. The good news is most trees and shrubs, if damaged early enough in the season, will produce new buds and grow just fine. Although it has been soggy lately, it has been helpful

that the trees have had lots of water to push new buds and foliage. Another positive is that spongy moth damage has been non-existent or minimal and the caterpillars that I saw hatching out earlier this year were all killed by the fungal disease that attacks this pest.

Although it looks like Halloween, these are not fake spider webs, but nests caused by the ugly nest caterpillar, *Archips cerasivorana*. These pictures were sent to the Clinic this spring/summer by a concerned homeowner in



Top: Frost damage on smoke bush. A. Hazelrigg.  
Bottom: Ugly nest caterpillar webbing in Northfield Falls and yellow larvae of the ugly nest caterpillar. P. Plumley.

Northfield Falls. This pest feeds on several types of hardwood trees and shrubs and is often found on chokecherries, pin cherry and black cherry. The eggs of the ugly nest caterpillar hatch when the leaves flush and thankfully, there is only one generation of the pest per year. The larvae feed from May to September in

unsightly webbed nests made up of bits of foliage, frass and silk, hence the name ugly nest caterpillar. The yellow caterpillars have a black head capsule and are fully grown at about three-fourths inch when they pupate in the nest. Adult moths emerge and are active from the end of June to September, when eggs are laid on the bark of host plants. Although ugly, these nests and pests cause minimal permanent damage. The caterpillars are best controlled when small if you spot them early. If you are able, and there are only a few nests, removal of the nests and caterpillars by hand and then dropped into soapy water would reduce the damage. Once they have approached three-fourth inch in size, they are tough to control



as they are protected within the nests. If the tree has been decimated by the pest, anything you can do to remove further stress in the tree, such as thorough watering during drought conditions, will help it withstand the attack. There should be no long-term health issues for the tree, however, but you may want to watch for the pests next year when the leaves flush to try to manage any infestations.

With all the recent wet weather, conspicuous neon yellow masses have appeared on bark mulches and lawns. These brightly colored blobs, called plasmodia, are unique organisms called slime molds. The harmless yellow foamy slime molds (often called the dog vomit slime mold) were originally classified as fungi, but are now in the Kingdom Protista, since they more closely resemble amoeba. The size of the masses can vary from a few inches to several feet in diameter and are not pathogenic to plants, although sometimes they can grow over plants and briefly decrease access to sunlight. The plasmodium is the feeding stage of the organism, engulfing bacteria, fungi and other microorganisms as it grows. Slime molds are beneficial since they contribute to the decomposition of dead vegetation. The plasmodial stage can appear to “creep” and can move several feet in a day, alarming gardeners. As slime molds age they fade from bright yellow to a crusty dull tan and release spores that can stay dormant until the next round of rainy weather. No control is necessary for slime molds. They will disappear as soon as the weather dries. To hasten their breakdown, you can break apart the blob with a rake.

As always, if you have a pest or disease question, start with picture to me at [Ann.hazelrigg@uvm.edu](mailto:Ann.hazelrigg@uvm.edu). We may be able to identify the problem from the picture or we can discuss whether a physical sample is needed.



Top: Bright yellow “dog vomit” slime mold, *Fuligo septica*.  
Joelle Kraft.

Bottom: Day old slime mold, *Fuligo septica*. Todd Chretien,  
Fair Share Farm, Maine

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

305 Hubbard Road  
Berwick, ME 03901



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





# News from the VT Agency of Agriculture, Foods & Markets

By: Judy Rosovsky, State Plant Regulatory Official and Entomologist, VAAFM

## July 2023

### Update on Natural Disasters, Legislation and Viral Visitors.

#### Flood Damage Resources:

Our hearts go out to all the growers and others in the state of Vermont who have experienced loss and damage from the July 9-10 storm. Resources for farmers, growers including crop and produce producers and others affected by the storm can be found on the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/flood>. Please note that producers of horticultural crops, Christmas Tree growers, and plant nurseries should report losses to your local FSA office. FSA offices can be found at <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=vt&agency=fsa>. Use the [USDA Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#) to find programs that may be applicable to your operation.

#### Regulatory Updates:

In the 2023 session, the legislature passed and the Governor signed **Act 73**, which among other **policy changes**, makes technical corrections to laws addressing nurseries, see <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2024/Docs/ACTS/ACT073/ACT073%20As%20Enacted.pdf>. To safeguard nursery industry and nursery stock sold, distributed into and installed in the state, new definitions for “distribute” and “install” were created to help clarify the definition of nursery dealer - “any person who is in the business of selling, installing, or distributing nursery stock for commercial gain.”

“Distribute” means the wholesale sale of nursery stock, the transfer of title or possession of nursery stock from one person to another for consideration for the purpose of resale at retail, or the transfer of nursery stock within a business entity for the purpose of retail sale. “Distribute” does not mean the retail sale or delivery of nursery stock by a retailer to a consumer.”  
“Install” means the placing, fixing, or planting of nursery stock in the ground or soil. “Install” does not mean delivery of nursery stock to a purchaser or the placing of potted nursery stock within a structure or its curtilage of the purchaser.”

Additional changes to the Vermont law align the Agency’s enforcement steps with other regulatory programs, including

ensuring that a nursery is made aware of its appeal rights in a written order issued by Agency staff. **This serves as a reminder to annually register with the Agency as a nursery dealer by April 30.**

#### Frost:

It is hard to remember during this summer heat and humidity that we experienced a late frost that caused a good deal of harm to growers. Anson Tebbetts, Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, had the following advice for people who were affected by that frost: “Any affected farmer in our region is encouraged to report their losses to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through their local Farm Services Office (FSA). It is unclear whether those who sustained losses will be eligible for financial relief assistance but it’s important to document and report any damages as soon as possible. You can find your local Vermont FSA County Office here: <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=vt&agency=fsa>. We will continue to support those growers who were hit by this hard freeze. This includes working with our Congressional delegation, Vermont lawmakers and neighboring states but this will be a difficult year for many of our apple, grape and fruit crop growers.” For more information on this please see the July issue of Agriview at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/view-116-july-2023>.

#### Virus Updates:

In recent plant regulatory news, a large shipment of roses infected with rose mosaic virus was shipped out to a number of eastern states. Vermont was due to receive a few of the diseased plants and we were fortunate that they were recalled before they were shipped. This incident set off regulatory actions within the affected states and led to a National Plant Board discussion with relevant industry members.

The virus is sometimes referred to as rose mosaic disease or rose mosaic virus disease and is a combination of two viral diseases, apple mosaic virus (ApMV) and prunus necrotic ring spot virus (PNRSV). In roses it is spread through propagative material (grafted buds or scions or more rarely, root stock) and not via soil or equipment or touch. It is still a good idea to sanitize hands and equipment after handling the plants. In apples this virus can be spread via pollen but that does not occur in roses. There may be other means of transmission



between the two that have not yet been discerned, which we know because in certain instances clean stock has become infected by unknown means.



*Rose infected with rose mosaic virus.*

*Chrysler Impala C23 is the name of the varietal.*

*Photo by Kim Rice, MD Department of Agriculture.*

While the disease does not usually kill the roses, the symptoms can be vivid, and the virus will adversely affect plant growth and flower production. Symptoms include ringspots, banding, lines and line patterns, mottling, splotchy mosaic patterns, yellow spots and puckering or other distortions of the leaf. The color of the chlorosis is usually yellow but can be orange or red. Diseased plants can be asymptomatic, and even asymptomatic leaves can carry the disease. Sometimes only part of the plant is symptomatic, and sometimes the symptoms go away though the plant is still infected.

For more details on the rose mosaic virus please see the University of Florida's website on RMD at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/PP338> or the New Mexico State page at [https://plantclinic.nmsu.edu/documents/rose-mosaic-virus-od-9\\_final.pdf](https://plantclinic.nmsu.edu/documents/rose-mosaic-virus-od-9_final.pdf). Both have good images of the symptoms.



*Images of tomato brown rugose fruit virus symptoms.*

*Photo by Dr. José Antonio Garzón*

*Tiznado, Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa-México.*

In another trace forward incident, some Vermont growers received seeds infected with Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus (TBRFV or ToBRFV, sometimes called Tom Brown). This

tobamovirus was first identified in Israel in 2014, and spread rapidly around the world, making it to Mexico and the US in 2018, though the earliest US detections were eradicated. Symptoms are similar to tomato and tobacco mosaic viruses, and the disease primarily affects tomatoes and peppers. The virus spreads easily via infected, seeds, plants, touch, mechanical contact and can stay stable in the soil for long periods of time. It is regulated as seeds, transplants and fruits though the USDA is reviewing these regulations and may open them for public comment soon.

VAAF is appreciative of all the growers who immediately disposed of the infected seeds and sanitized their facilities after being notified of the infected shipments.



*Symptoms of chili pepper mild mottle virus. Photo by University of Florida Extension/IFAS, Publication HS-808.*

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV275>.

Chili pepper mild mottle virus (CPMMoV, or PMMV) is a disease of peppers (and some related plants, like calibrachoa) which causes mottling symptoms and yield reduction. There have been some reports of the virus spreading through the nursery trade. The pathogen can be highly contagious. Symptoms may vary from cultivar to cultivar, but may include light green/yellow mottled leaves, puckered leaves, stunted plants, and mottled, splotchy, stunted, or "lumpy" fruit. Some good news is that since this pathogen is closely related to Tobacco Mosaic Virus, tests strips used to identify the latter will often show up positive with PMMV. If you suspect that your plants have PMMV, it is wise to remove them from your stock. Any plants that test positive with a TMV test strip should be destroyed. The virus is usually introduced to a field by infected stock or seed, so it's important to source from a reputable supplier. It should be noted that these viruses are extremely hardy. It isn't known to be spread by insects. In fact, humans are the primary vectors for viral particles: they spread easily on workers hands and tools and can last for extended periods of time in such places. To reduce the spread, any plots with suspected infection should be worked only after healthy plots, workers should regularly wash hands with strong soap, and tools should be disinfected. Infected plants should be



buried or composted (and the compost not used on any solanaceous plants). Virus particles may spread by smoke, so plants should not be burned. Crop rotation is important to prevent the build-up of a pathogen reservoir in the soil. For additional reading please see <https://e-gro.org/pdf/2022-11-20.pdf> or <https://web.archive.org/web/20100806190356/http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/cv275>.

Victor Izzo and Scott Lewins from UVM Extension provide a monthly scouting report at their blog. The mid-July version and archives can be found at <https://blog.uvm.edu/vepart-scouting/2023/07/13/vvbg-scouting-report-7-13-23/>. If you join the Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association listserv (see [www.vvbga.org](http://www.vvbga.org)) the report will be sent to you automatically. Vic and Scott report that they are




Figure 4. Tarnished plant bug.  
Photo by Will Visage.

seeing curcubit downy mildew but not basil downy mildew. If you think you have basil downy mildew they ask that you report it to UVM's Plant Diagnostic Clinic at <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/pdc>. Other pests found during scouting were low levels of leek moths; ample swede midge that seems to be targeting red Russian kale, and tarnished plant bugs, which are being found primarily on chard and potatoes.

Be careful in the aftermath of the storm. And if you are a member of the VVBGA please note that several generous growers have offered free or discounted plants or seeds via the VVBGA listserv to those who lost plants in the floods.


**Fairfax Perennial Farm**  
Wholesale Perennial Growers



7 Blackberry Hill Road ~ Fairfax, VT 05454  
802-849-2775  
[perennialfarm@surglobal.net](mailto:perennialfarm@surglobal.net)

**elmore roots**  
elmoreroots.com  
fruitpal@elmoreroots.com  
802.888.7668

*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.*



**VT NATIVE TREES and SHRUBS are our specialty!**  
Along with **FRUIT TREES and BERRY PLANTS** for the **COLDEST HILLSIDES**



# THE IDEA FACTORY

*tips & trends, food for thought...*



At the recent Cultivate '23 event Dr. Charles Hall, who serves as the Chief Economist for AmericanHort and co-chairs the Advisory Council of See Your Future, gave the opening “State of the Industry” address. *Nursery Magazine* recently wrote about the 3 takeaways from that address:

1. Most growers reported increased profits in the first part of 2023.
2. 25-35 year-olds are a potential boom market.
3. A recession isn't imminent.

You can read more about that presentation [HERE](#).

## INDUSTRY PODCAST TO CHECK OUT!



Sponsored by the National Association of Landscape Professionals, The Big Green Podcast is hosted by Britt Wood. He chats with CEO's and industry leaders about trending topics.

Subscribe [HERE](#).



The Growing in the Green Industry Podcast was created and produced by the Young Professionals Network. They discuss current topics in the industry that matter most for landscape professionals,

Subscribe [HERE](#).



This Studio One Podcast addresses safety and risk management issues that can affect a business's bottom line.

Subscribe [HERE](#).

## GREENHOUSE GROWER

Greenhouse Grower recently announced the 2023 Medal of Excellent Award Winners which celebrates greenhouse operations, plant breeders, technology companies and other organizations that strive for excellence. You can watch the slideshow the winners [HERE](#).





# STRICTLY BUSINESS

*no kidding ...*

## Team Retention: Part 1 Paying a Living Wage vs Minimum Wage and Part 2 Balancing ‘Lifestyle’ with Work *by Jacki Hart*

Please note the following article, while pertaining to Ontario Canada, contains some interesting information related to what employee wages.



### Part 1

There are many ways in which The Pandemic left a lasting impact on our profession. Some have been extremely beneficial while others are applying pressure to profitability and team retention.

Among some of the strongest legacy benefits we’ve experienced in the last few years, the one that stands out in my mind the most, is the elevated consumer/home-owner awareness and appreciation for the benefit of landscapes and pleasant outdoor spaces. There was a huge increase in demand for residential landscaping – at all levels – and the related ripple effect that spread across all green profession sectors – drove unprecedented sales, when many sectors in the economy were shut down or drastically restricted.

We have also seen an unprecedented influx of job seekers – from both the sectors (i.e. food, entertainment, travel, retail) that were deeply restricted, and from those sectors where workers realized how much ‘safer’ they felt to work outdoors. Along with this worker migration, has also come labour shortages in manufacturing and logistics – among other pressures driving inflation to levels we haven’t seen in decades. With higher costs of living comes demands for higher wages to make ends meet.

Many of you reading this column are living this new reality – which is putting an unprecedented squeeze on the gap between labour burden costs, and charge out rates.

While we’ve never before (at least not in my 43-year green industry career) been poised to leverage this level of increased

demand and respect for our products and services, it is somewhat bittersweet. In order to meet increased demand, the pressure is on us to attract, acquire and retain great team players like never before. And we need to be competitive in our wage rates, benefits and perks.

Enter the Living Wage. It’s now a ‘thing’. And it’s a powerful recruiting tool when properly leveraged.

Consider this chart, and check in on the ‘living wage’ currently posted for your area:

Region	Rate/hr
Greater Toronto Area	\$23.15
Grey Bruce Perth Huron Simcoe	\$20.70
Dufferin Waterloo Guelph-Wellington	\$19.95
Brant Niagara Haldimand Norfolk	\$19.80
North	\$19.70
Ottawa	\$19.60
East	\$19.05
Hamilton	\$19.05
Southwest	\$18.15
London Elgin Oxford	\$18.05

Living Wage is the new minimum wage for competitive employers. You can [apply and become certified as a living wage employer here](#) - then promote it on your social media posts and recruitment marketing across all channels. If you’re not already paying your lower wage earners the ‘living



wage', it will require a 'reset' to get your wage rates up to a competitive level. Similarly, your charge out rates will have to take a bump up also.

Many business owners push back on raising their charge out rates, afraid to lose customers on price. Those with multi-year contracts into which there are no clauses allowing for increased pricing or renegotiation, indeed have a challenge. But for those who price their contracts each year, or by the project, the room is there to increase rates. Getting past the 'price increase' barrier, requires a change in perspective.

### **For years, labour has been the top-of-mind issue. Consider this new scenario checklist:**

- You have a higher demand for job seekers wanting to work outside. [Check.](#)
- You have a steady right-fit sales funnel. [Check.](#)
- You are paying a Living Wage to your newest/entry level employees, and everyone else proportionately more based on merit and capability. [Check.](#)
- You are charging out your labour and COGS plus Overhead Recovery at a rate sufficient to earn the profit you've targeted. [Check.](#)
- Your team is engaged, excited to learn and grow into the opportunities you have laid out for them. [Check.](#)
- You have 90% retention year after year – and have little recruiting, onboarding and training to do each spring. [Check.](#)



## **Part 2**

### **The Lifestyle-First Habit**

Without a doubt, the Work From Home (WFH) trend has changed the mindset of a scary percentage of the workforce across the country. Everyone I've asked in my travels this year, knows someone who still works from home (either hybrid or full time), who would previously have always gone to an office or place of business 'to work'. Along with this trend, comes the 'oh I can do laundry, make dinner and walk the dog (literally and figuratively) – while I'm getting paid working from home'. While the corporate world is busy creating policies on RTW, dragging unwilling employees back and creating consequences of the refusal to return to the office, employees and legislators

are figuring out ways to force employers to pay huge termination settlements if employees refuse to return full time, and many employers are being forced to concede to hybrid arrangements at the expense of productivity and profit.

What does all that have to do with employee retention in the Landscape Professions? Lots.

During the pandemic, many had to be creative to make ends meet. And many benefitted from government subsidies for a LONG time. Employers did as well. This new reality plunks us squarely into an economy that's navigating higher interest rates, less discretionary spending, unleashed inflation, and new habits of staying closer to home – for a living. For most employers for whom I write this column, staying home means not getting paid.

So, we have a workforce that in many ways want or expect to be able to continue this new habit of managing their lives conveniently, which includes fitting the personal 'weekly tasks' within the work week – so that weekends are free for friends and fun. Add to this, the ever-changing interests of Gen Z (18-30 yrs) whom are less likely to stick to one job for more than a short period of time, and we have a workforce retention challenge that puts us into a whole new ball game.

### **The New Retention Landscape**

When the going gets tough, the leading entrepreneurs get creative. Now would be a good time for you to join them. What this all means to seasonal businesses – is that the model of a workforce willing work 45+ hours a week for 30-ish weeks a year and then fend for themselves the rest of the time, is officially now defunct. So is the model where employees must be willing to work 5 days a week, starting and finishing at the same time every day, and the same time as everyone else, or there's no job offer.

Reset your thinking. Employee retention is now inextricably linked to the 'lifestyle balance' and 'stress minimization' that your company affords them. This means having conversations about wants and needs. And about the stress that each employee is navigating outside of work. (Yes, you read that correctly.) It means having new policies on 'days and hours of work'. Policies which include room for flexibility and customization from one employee to the next. It means building empathy into attendance policies. It means that 'training' has to be a confidence builder and not a source of anxiety when paired with the quick addition of responsibility. It also means ensuring that employees know that they have to show up when they say they will – I'm seeing successful employers negotiate convenience (for the employee) with dependability (for the employer).

The hardest part of this is that employers are being pinched tighter on margins, to make room for more people on staff at



any given time and a more complex scheduling regimen to balance it all on the customer-facing side of the business. At a time when employers feel the need to improve ‘efficiency’, many employees are feeling the need to rest more and stress less.

If paying the Living Wage is step one to retention. Then post-pandemic ‘lifestyle balance’ is step two.

The reality is, the higher percentage of staff under the age of 35 that a company employs (I’m stereotyping here – yet it’s a clear trend), the more likely it is that a significant number of staff are walking out the door because either your workplace is too stressful for them or their home/social life is. Some of you reading this might roll your eyes and think ‘so what does that have to do with my company’.... To you I ask this: “How’s retention going for you?” In all likelihood, I’ll hazard to guess, not very well.

This is a time to slow down in order to go faster. Slow down and talk to your staff. One on one. Informally. Go for a coffee. Pick them up during the workday and go sit on a park bench. Care, and show it. You don’t need to act as a therapist – but you could direct them toward one if you think it would help. You don’t need to be a ‘parent’, but you might want to keep a box of Kleenex in your truck. Sometimes people just need to know you care. If you do, they will trust you. If they trust you, they will be

more likely to stay. If they stay, you grow bench strength and minimize the need to recruit and train. Think about it.

Retention. It’s not only about the money. It’s about belonging. It’s about personal ‘safety’. It’s about being a part of a social network that is supportive. It’s about realizing that the employers’ role has changed for the foreseeable future. Honest.

**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](http://www.consultingbyhart.com).

## 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



# THE PLANT LOUNGE

wiry stems, hairy leaves and bodacious blooms. . .

## *Acer japonica* 'Aconitifolium'

by Mark Dwyer, Landscape Prescriptions by MD

I've closely observed a trio of 20-year-old specimens of 'Aconitifolium' fullmoon maple and two consistent features are re-emphasized and appreciated every year: amazing fall color and a stalwart hardiness. Native to mountainous areas of Japan, Manchuria and Korea, this maple species prefers light, dappled shade, cool summers and sites protected from strong winds. Moist, organically-rich and slightly acidic soils are preferred. Well-drained soils are a necessity. The straight species (*A. japonicum*) is taller but this compact, mounded and frequently multi-trunked selection tops out between 10' and 15' with a similar width. Early staking efforts can encourage more erect growth.

The rounded, palmate and deeply divided (toothed and cut) leaves have 7-11 lobes and the varietal name of 'Aconitifolium' refers to "foliage of *Aconitum*" (like a monkshood) which is not hard to discern. Some degree of shading is preferred for this tree as leaves may scorch in full sun, particularly in areas with warmer summers. The fall color of this tree transitions, even in part shade, from an intense orange-red to the deepest of carmine-red tones and this progression lasts many weeks. I would not hesitate to say that the fall color of this tree is a personal favorite and one of the most intense and memorable. This tree does poorly south of USDA z7. Consider mulching to keep the roots cool. The smallish, purple-red flowers in early spring put on a minor show prior to the foliage emerging but the fall color is the star of the show.



I've planted many specimens of this tree and recommended it to many clients in the Midwest as I've observed this selection emerge from the coldest of Midwest winters with no damage while Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum*) have been severely damaged or killed. This variety is thought to be hardier than other selections of *Acer japonicum* as well as the straight species. There is some susceptibility to verticillium wilt, leaf spots, root rots, anthracnose, cankers and some insects as is the case with many maples. Propagation is commonly through grafting or softwood cuttings.

### Why Grow *Acer japonicum* 'Aconitifolium'?

- Amazing ruby-crimson fall color (long lasting!)
- Excellent small tree for the smaller garden
- Significant textural accent
- Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society (1984)

### Specifics

**Name:** *Acer japonicum* 'Aconitifolium'

**Common Name:** fernleaf fullmoon maple, "Dancing Peacock" maple ('Maiku jaku')

**Description:** This compact, mounded, small tree features amazing textural foliage that transitions for many weeks in the fall with a transition from orange to crimson coloration. Surprisingly hardy, this is a true, smaller specimen tree with big impact in the landscape.

**Hardiness:** USDA z 5-7



## In the Landscape

This small tree is an excellent specimen in the partly shaded border or garden. As a textural element, this tree offers amazing interest and structure which is only intensified through the progression of impactful crimson fall color. Consider multiple specimens for a fall color echo!

*This plant feature is printed with permission from the author and Nursery 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](mailto:mcdwyer@zoho.com) Visit: [www.landscapeprescriptionsmd.com](http://www.landscapeprescriptionsmd.com).



We Are Your One-Stop Horticultural Supplier

## Wholesale Horticultural Distribution Centers

- Quality Plant Material • Complete Selection of Hardgoods • Stone Products & Stone Display
- Landscape Lighting & Water Garden Supplies • 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](http://www.northernnurseries.com)

Manager: Mike Trombly Sales: Tucker Homan

*Vermont*  
Nursery and  
Landscape Association  
Green Works



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](http://www.vnlavt.org)