

THE DIRT



SPRING ISSUE 2024, VOLUME 50, ISSUE 1



VNLA WINTER MEETING RECAP

VNLA AWARD WINNERS

THE 2025 VERMONT FLOWER SHOW

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Helleboros niger

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

GABE BUSHEY, CRAFTED LANDSCAPES, LLC



DEAR FELLOW VNLA MEMBERS, COLLEAGUES,
AND FRIENDS,

The calendar says it is Spring even though as I write this we are cleaning up from the largest storm of the year. Of course, spring in Vermont is always unpredictable. It looks like it will all melt off this week and hopefully we can all transition into great working weather.

The year of change. That's how I am looking at the last 12 months. My wife and I bought a house, renovated that house, had a son, and got married. The VNLA is also experiencing changes. Kristina has officially stepped down as executive director. It was really nice to see all the support for her at the annual meeting, which was very much deserved. Jas has stepped in and is learning fast. She has had regular meetings with Kristina until she has a full handle on all the responsibilities of the position. There is so much to that job and the responsibilities change as the year goes by. The VNLA board is staying the same this year. A first for as far back as any of us can remember. This consistency is helpful as we move forward with other changes.

The 2025 Vermont Flower show planning is in full swing. We have had 4 meetings of the Display Committee with one more planned before the super busy season begins. We have a great team of creators in place working on several different station ideas. The theme of the show is "A Story of Gardening". Bulbs have been ordered and many other meetings, orders, and plans are taking place as well. We do have some critical roles that we could use some additional help with. Kristina is also stepping down from her role with the show so there is a whole array of tasks she would normally do. From marketing, to planning and coordinating and everything else in between. Also there will be a need for some new help with the clean-up process. Aaron Smith will be available to mentor and assist. As always we welcome anyone interested in helping in any capacity. Please don't hesitate to reach out. It is an amazing group of people to work with and a truly rewarding process. We are all looking forward to putting on another amazing and successful show.

Celebrating 60 Years of VNLA: Nurturing Vermont's Horticultural Legacy (Part 1)

In the heart of Vermont, where the seasons paint landscapes with vibrant hues, the Vermont Plantsmen's Association (VPA) took root six decades ago. Founded on March 10, 1964, this non-profit organization has been a stalwart guardian of Vermont's horticultural heritage, nurturing its growth and evolution over the years.

Planting the Seeds of Community

The seeds of the VPA were planted in the early 1960s through the vision of Fred Abbey, the driving force behind Gardenside Nursery in Shelburne, and Dr. Harrison Flint, an Extension Ornamental Horticulturist at the University of Vermont. Their discussions blossomed into action, culminating in the formation of a committee during the Plantsmen's Day event in the summer of 1963. This committee set out to establish a professional organization to unite Vermont's plant enthusiasts.

In January 1964, the inaugural meeting convened at the Horticultural Hall, Municipal Auditorium in Barre, Vermont.



Despite modest beginnings and cramped quarters under the stage of the auditorium, this gathering marked the official birth of the Vermont Plantsmen's Association. With Fred Abbey at the helm as president, the association embarked on its mission to enrich Vermont with the beauty of plants and promote education, legislation, and mutual benefits among its members.

Cultivating Growth and Collaboration

As the years passed, the VPA flourished, attracting growers, greenhouse operators, landscapers, and plant enthusiasts from across the state. It became a hub of knowledge exchange, with speakers delving into topics ranging from plant propagation to pest control. Membership soared as growers recognized the importance of staying informed, nurtured by the informative newsletter, *The Potting Bench*.

Under the dedicated leadership of individuals like Richard Salter, the first Executive Secretary, the VPA bloomed into a beacon of professionalism and advocacy. Salter's tireless efforts in managing finances, organizing meetings, and spearheading initiatives left an indelible mark on the Association.





Nurturing Connections and Diversity

Throughout its history, the VPA forged strong partnerships with entities like the University of Vermont Extension Service and the Vermont Department of Agriculture, receiving invaluable support and guidance. Extension specialists like Dr. Leonard Perry played pivotal roles in organizing educational events and fostering cooperation within the horticultural community.

The Association's journey hasn't been without challenges. It navigated debates over membership eligibility, changes in leadership structures, and geographical disparities in member engagement. Yet, with each hurdle, the VPA emerged stronger, embracing inclusivity and diversity within its ranks.

Embracing Innovation and Evolution

In the late 20th century, the VPA rebranded as the Vermont Association of Professional Horticulturists (VAPH), reflecting its commitment to professionalism and inclusivity. However, the essence of its mission remained unchanged—to nurture Vermont's horticultural heritage and foster a thriving plant industry.

In the 21st century, the VAPH evolved further, exploring innovative avenues like online communication platforms and marketing initiatives. The organization continued to adapt to the changing landscape of Vermont's plant industry, championing initiatives like the Vermont Grown Program and the Vermont Certified Horticulturist Program.

Continuing the Journey

As the Vermont Landscape and Nursery Association (VNLA), the organization stands today as a testament to the resilience and passion of Vermont's horticultural community. Its biennial flower shows, educational programs, and advocacy efforts continue to enrich the lives of plant enthusiasts across the state.

This is just the beginning of our journey through six decades of VNLA's history. Stay tuned for Part 2 as we delve deeper into the milestones, challenges, and triumphs that have shaped our vibrant community. Join us as we celebrate 60 years of nurturing Vermont's horticultural legacy!

Article adapted from [A History of Vermont Nursery & Landscape Association](#) by Dr Norman Pellett, Professor Emeritus, University of Vermont

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Appreciation and Adaptation: Summary of the 2024 VNLA Winter Meeting



The VNLA Winter Meeting was a dynamic and rewarding event, showcasing both industry insights and heartfelt recognition. Attendees were engaged in a series of informative sessions, discussions, and award presentations.

The day began with a session led by Martin Harwood on "Adapting Landscapes for Climate Change," setting the tone for discussions on resilience and innovation in the face of environmental challenges.

Following a visit with vendors, the meeting proceeded with the VNLA Business Meeting, Awards, and Election of Officers. Meeting minutes were sent out to all members, but if you missed it let us know and we'll share them again!

The annual awards ceremony honored outstanding professionals and organizations within the industry.

Attendees celebrated the achievements of Linzy Vos, who received the Young Nursery Professional of the Year Award, and Holly Greenleaf, recipient of the 2023 Environmental Awareness Award. Peet Farm Greenhouse was recognized as the Retailer of the Year, while Anika Adams received the Allen B. Crane Horticultural Employee Acknowledgement Award. The Horticultural Achievement Award was bestowed upon Kristina MacKulin, and horticulture students Erin Camire and Ryan Winegar received student merit awards.

In addition, the 2023 Industry Awards were presented, honoring outstanding projects by Church Hill Landscapes, Inc., Ginkgo Design LLC, Gavin Boyce-Ratliff, LLC, and Crafted Landscapes, LLC.





During the lunch break, attendees seized the opportunity to not only refuel with delicious food but also to reconnect and engage in meaningful conversations with colleagues and peers. This informal networking period provided a valuable chance for professionals within the landscape industry to exchange ideas, share experiences, and forge new connections.

As the afternoon sessions commenced, little did attendees know that the agenda held a delightful surprise. The first set of afternoon sessions, ostensibly focused on informative topics, served as a clever decoy to set the stage for a heartfelt tribute to Kristina MacKulin, the outgoing Executive Director of VNLA.

Kristina was honored in a multitude of touching ways, each gesture reflecting the profound impact she had made on the VNLA community. She was adorned with an extra special handmade flower crown, symbolizing her blooming legacy and vibrant presence within the organization. Former board members took the stage to deliver heartfelt speeches, sharing their observations and experiences of Kristina's unwavering compassion, dedication, and leadership over the years.

These personal anecdotes painted a vivid picture of Kristina's profound influence and the deep bonds she had cultivated within the VNLA family. A slideshow crafted by current board members with the assistance of VNLA members captured elusive moments from Kristina's tenure.

In addition to these heartfelt tributes, Kristina was presented with a book of cards filled with warm wishes and expressions of gratitude from VNLA members, as well as a generous travel voucher, a token of appreciation intended to facilitate her exploration of new horizons and adventures.

The surprise tribute was a moment of celebration, reflection, and gratitude, as attendees came together to honor and express their appreciation for Kristina's remarkable leadership and unwavering dedication.

The day concluded with additional concurrent sessions focusing on practical skills and knowledge. Cheryl-Frank Sullivan, UVM Research Assistant Professor, led a session on tick-borne diseases and landscape management strategies, while Kris Stepenuck, UVM Extension Associate Professor, discussed "Smart Salting and Planting in a Changing Climate."

Article Written by: Jas Darland



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Celebrating Excellence in Vermont's Horticultural Industry: 2023-2024 VNLA Award Winners



Nate Carr, Gavin Boyce-Ratliff, David Burton and Gabe Bushey - 2023 Industry Award Winners

The presentation of the VNLA/Green Works awards took center stage at the Winter Meeting on February 15, 2024, held during the VNLA Annual Business Meeting at the UVM Davis Center. Amidst a gathering of esteemed industry professionals, all winners received their well-deserved accolades, marking a momentous occasion in Vermont's horticultural calendar.

As we shine a spotlight on these exceptional individuals and organizations, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to each of them for their outstanding contributions. You can read their nomination paragraphs [here](#).



2023 Horticultural Achievement Award:
Kristina MacKulin
VNLA
North Ferrisburgh, VT

As a pivotal figure within VNLA, Kristina's visionary leadership and unwavering commitment have propelled the organization towards new heights, fostering innovation and collaboration within the horticultural community.



2023 Environmental Awareness Award:
Holly Greenleaf
Greenleaf Design LLC
Huntington, VT

Greenleaf Design LLC stands as a beacon of environmental stewardship, earning the 2023 Environmental Awareness Award for their steadfast commitment to sustainable practices.



2023 Retailer of the Year Award:
Peet Farm Greenhouse
Cornwall, VT

Peet Farm Greenhouse VT has been crowned the Retailer of the Year for 2023, a testament to their unwavering dedication to excellence in customer service and product quality.



2023 Allen B. Crane Horticultural Employee Acknowledgement Award:
Anika Adams
Elmore Roots Fruit Tree Nursery
Elmore, VT

Anika Adams' exemplary contributions to Elmore Roots Fruit Tree Nursery have not gone unnoticed, earning her the prestigious Allen B. Crane Horticultural Employee Acknowledgement Award for 2023. Anika's unwavering dedication, exceptional leadership, and passion for horticulture have set a shining example for her peers, embodying the spirit of excellence within the industry.



2024 Young Nursery Professional of the Year Award: Linzy Vos
Rocky Dale Gardens
Bristol, VT

Linzy Vos has been recognized for her exceptional talent, dedication, and promise within the horticultural sphere. As a rising star at Rocky Dale Gardens, Linzy's innovative approach and unwavering commitment to excellence serve as an inspiration to her colleagues and peers alike.



2024 Student Merit Award
University of Vermont & Vermont State University

The 2024 Student Merit Awards go to Erin Camire (pictured above) from the University of Vermont (UVM) and Ryan Winegar from Vermont State University (VSU). These students showcase remarkable dedication and skill in horticulture, embodying the promising future of the industry.



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2023 Industry Award Winners

In its 15th year, the VNLA/Green Works Awards program once again illuminated the exceptional accomplishments within Vermont's horticultural industry. At the esteemed Winter Meeting, the spotlight shone brightly on the 2023 winners as they were presented with coveted award trophies, honoring their exemplary projects and contributions to the field. Let's delve into the remarkable achievements of this year's honorees:



Addressing accessibility and aesthetic concerns for over 600 students and families, the team centralized the entrance, improved grades for accessibility and flood prevention, and enhanced stormwater management. This transformative renovation, lauded by the school's Principal, reflects the company's commitment to enhancing outdoor spaces and community well-being.



Church Hill Landscapes, Inc - Honor Award <https://www.churchhilllandscapes.com> Edmunds School Renovation - Nate Carr

Church Hill Landscapes, Inc. revitalized the historical Edmunds School campus, dating back to 1903, on one of Burlington's busiest downtown streets.



Ginkgo Design LLC - Honor Award

<https://www.ginkgodesignvt.com>

Carriage Barn Renovation - David Burton

The Carriage Barn Renovation aimed to convert the space into a comfortable guest area, aligning with the main house's style and providing outdoor entertaining space.



Design solutions included easy access from the primary dwelling, cohesive aesthetics with the main house, and thoughtful landscaping. The project integrated natural materials like bluestone pavers and granite cobblestones while ensuring low maintenance with mass plantings of shrubs and perennials.



Gavin Boyce-Ratliff Landscape Design, LLC - Honor Award

<https://www.gbrlandscape.com>

Beaver Meadow Garden - Gavin Boyce-Ratliff

Born from the introspection of a global pandemic, Beaver Meadow Garden emerged as a response to the client's longing for immediate beauty and connection with nature.



Situated in Sharon, Vermont, the project aimed to transform a 65-acre property into a vibrant sanctuary. Despite challenges posed by sandy, low-fertility soils, strategic plant selection and minimal soil disruption resulted in a thriving ecosystem. Through native species and drought-tolerant approaches, the garden flourished, showcasing resilience and beauty in uncertain times.



Lakeside Landscaping - Gabe Bushey

The project transformed a property with imposing concrete walls and uneven stairs into a serene retreat over six months. Bluestone steps replaced the stairs, surrounded by plantings to soften the hardscapes. Soil was replaced, and hardy plants were added to withstand windy conditions.



Boulders, patios, seating areas, perennial gardens, and raised vegetable beds enhanced the property's appeal. Curving walkways provided access, while the driveway was redesigned to blend with the environment. The beach area was transformed with walkways, plantings, and a grass area, creating a serene lakeside retreat.



Experience the full breadth of these award-winning projects by exploring complete slideshows on our [website](#). For an in-depth feature, be sure to catch the [Seven Days Newspaper](#) insert, available online. Congratulations to all the winners for their remarkable achievements in 2023! Your dedication and creativity continue to inspire and enrich Vermont's horticultural landscape.

Celebrating Excellence: Enter Your Projects for the 2024 VNLA Industry Awards

In the dynamic realm of landscaping and design, recognition is not just a badge of honor—it's a testament to dedication, innovation, and the pursuit of excellence. As we prepare to embrace the summer season, the Vermont Nursery and Landscape Association (VNLA) extends a warm invitation to landscapers and designers to capture the essence of their significant projects through photography and submit them for the esteemed 2024 VNLA Industry Awards.

A Testimony of Success:

Award-winning designs don't just adorn portfolios; they become a hallmark of expertise and ingenuity. Each landscape project undertaken is a labor of love, a fusion of creativity and craftsmanship. The 2024 VNLA Industry Awards seek to celebrate these masterpieces and honor the talented individuals who breathe life into outdoor spaces.

Why Submit Your Projects?

For David E. Burton, VCH, 2023 Honor Award winner, the title of "Award Winning Designer" is more than just a phrase—it's a testament to the recognition and validation received from peers in the industry. He remarks, "Award Winning Designer" is a great title to add to my marketing and it feels good to be able to say. This Industry Awards program makes that possible. As a designer, it is affirming and encouraging to have my peers recognize my efforts to bring beautiful landscapes into reality. It also helps potential clients have confidence in my abilities to meet their needs. This program helps me significantly and is well worth the effort to take finished pictures and go through the submittal process."

Celebrating Team Excellence:

For Nate Carr, VCH, 2023 Honor Award winner, the VNLA Industry Awards are not just about individual recognition but also about honoring the collective efforts of a dedicated team. He emphasizes, "The program is rewarding for us to participate in because it is an important way for us to recognize the considerable contributions of our team members. After a job is complete that is often the last a team member will engage with it. But when the job that the team members worked so hard to accomplish is deemed to be worthy of an award, that is when they are celebrated by their peers in the industry for their accomplishment."

How to Showcase Your Success:

Photographing your projects is the first step towards immortalizing your achievements. Whether it's a sprawling garden oasis, a captivating hardscape installation, or an environmentally conscious design, every project has a story to tell. Capture the essence of your work through high-quality photographs and submit them for consideration in the 2024 VNLA Industry Awards.

Conclusion:

As the summer season beckons, let us seize the opportunity to celebrate excellence in landscaping and design. By submitting your significant projects for the 2024 VNLA Industry Awards, you not only honor your craftsmanship but also pay tribute to the collaborative spirit that defines our industry. Together, let's capture the beauty of our landscapes and inspire future generations of designers and landscapers.

Don't miss your chance to showcase your talents and be recognized among the best in the industry!

Article Written by: Ashley Robinson & Jas Darland

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A Story of Gardening: The 2025 Vermont Flower Show

The 2025 Vermont Flower Show is just around the corner, scheduled to take place from March 7th to 9th at the Champlain Valley Exposition Center! Every two years, this highly anticipated event serves as a celebration of nature's beauty and a testament to the passion and creativity of the horticultural community in Vermont. With just over 13,000 people in attendance for the 2023 show, we are excited to bring our next show forward. The 2025 show theme is **"A Story of Gardening"**. The Grand Garden Display Committee has been meeting since early winter and they are excited to bring this story to life so mark your calendars!

For those who may be unfamiliar, the Vermont Flower Show is a truly unique experience in the world of horticultural exhibitions. Each year, VNLA members and associates come together to build an awe-inspiring themed landscaped display spanning an impressive 15,000 square feet—equivalent to about an acre of vibrant flora and enchanting landscapes. It's a labor of love that requires the dedication and expertise of our talented members, as well as the generous contributions of plants, materials, and labor from our supportive community.

But the Vermont Flower Show is much more than just a garden display. It's a vibrant hub of activity and inspiration, offering a wide array of features and attractions for visitors to enjoy. From live painting demonstrations by local artists to a bustling marketplace featuring over 100 vendors offering horticultural treasures, home accessories, and more, there's something for everyone to explore and discover.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the Vermont Flower Show is the opportunity it provides for education and enrichment. With over 35 educational seminars and hands-on workshops covering a diverse range of topics, attendees can expand their knowledge and enhance their gardening skills under the guidance of seasoned experts.

None of this would be possible without the dedication and commitment of our volunteers! We are currently seeking enthusiastic individuals to join our team. As a volunteer, you'll have the chance to contribute your unique talents and expertise to the creation of our grand garden display, working alongside fellow garden enthusiasts to craft a breathtaking showcase of nature's beauty.



Help us make this year's exhibition the best one yet!

Together, we'll bring the beauty of nature to life at the 2025 Vermont Flower Show. If you are interested in getting involved with the planning of this next show please contact Gabe Bushey, VNLA president at gabe.w.bushey@gmail.com.

Welcome to 2023's New Members

For all of us who are Vermont winter veterans this hide-and-peek between winter and spring is par for the course. The most exciting part of this game is that spring is at the doorstep and we are mere days away from our gardens, lawns, and landscapes. You can already smell it in the morning when you walk out the door. Honestly, I think it's a drug—and honestly the best kind of drug.

We will have some new colleagues joining us this spring and we are excited to share with them the opportunities of membership in the VNLA. Please take a moment and help me welcome those who joined VNLA in 2023:

- Balsam Hill Farm
- Carpenter & Costin
- Champlain Valley Zenscapes, LLC
- Custom Landscapes, LLC
- Dicot Land Studio, LLC
- Ethan Bond-Watts
- Farm Craft VT
- Gavin Boyce-Ratliff, LLC
- Green Country Corners
- J. Labrecque, LLC
- Kingdom Gardens, LLC
- Red Clover Landscape Design & Consultation
- Uncommon Perfection Land Works, LLC
- Vermont Compost Company

Perhaps our greatest value as an Association is combined years of “in-the-trenches” experience. Let us as individuals not be selfish or stodgy with this information and come alongside these new members and mentor them in both the VNLA as well as our individual disciplines. This effort will bolster our trade and our organization providing better opportunities for all practitioners.

We also want to take a moment to recognize those who have formally certified their knowledge with the VNLA in the Vermont Certified Horticulturist exam. Our new VCHers in 2023 were:

- Gavin Boyce-Ratliff, LLC
- Danielle Norris of Greenhaven Gardens & Nursery

To our new members and our new VCH ers—please don't be strangers. This organization is only as good as its participants. Seek out a veteran, look to get involved in volunteer opportunities—we have many. If you don't know where to start, reach out to a director and we would be happy to connect you with a mentor or an opportunity.

Article Written by: Aaron Smith



Other VNLA Happenings

VNLA Continues its Eco-Friendly Initiative: Recycling Plastics for a Greener Future

In a bid to foster sustainability within its community, the Vermont Nursery and Landscape Association (VNLA) is gearing up for its fourth consecutive year of plastic recycling.

The initiative aims to provide VNLA members with a convenient avenue to recycle #2 and #5 plastics, thereby contributing to environmental conservation efforts. We will soon unveil the collection times and dates, inviting members to participate actively in this eco-friendly endeavor.

What Can Be Recycled:

All plastic containers and pots, regardless of size (ranging from 1 gallon to 2 gallons, and beyond), marked with the #2 and #5 plastic symbols, are eligible for recycling. To streamline the process, participants are urged to categorize their pots into distinct groups: #2 plastics and #5 plastics, ensuring they are empty and free from any tags or debris. While cleanliness is encouraged, it is not mandatory for participation.

How Pots Can Be Recycled:

Upon arrival at the collection sites, participants are required to sort their pots according to their designated #2 and #5 plastic categories. Additionally, VNLA members have the option to construct pallets and deliver them to the collection sites. These pallets should not exceed a height of 7 1/2 feet and must be easily loadable via a forklift. For those interested in crafting their pallets, kits are available upon request by contacting hello@vnlavt.org.

Who Can Participate:

Initially exclusive to VNLA members, the program may be extended to non-members and the public at individual collection sites' discretion. The gradual approach is aimed at ensuring the program's success without overwhelming any specific collection site. Throughout the summer, VNLA will closely monitor the program's progress, making necessary adjustments to enhance its effectiveness.

As VNLA continues its commitment to environmental stewardship, this recycling initiative stands as a testament to its dedication to promoting sustainable practices within the industry. Through collective efforts and participation, VNLA members are poised to make a tangible impact on reducing plastic waste and paving the way for a greener future.

SAVE THE DATE!

**The VNLA Summer Meeting & Trade Show
Wednesday, August 14th, 2024
to be held at the Cobble Creek Nursery
991 Tyler Bridge Road - Bristol, VT 05443**

We will have additional speakers, demonstrations, tours, good food and great company!

REGISTRATION COMING SOON!

Toward Sustainable Soil Solutions: Leading the Charge Against Jumping Worms

As a horticultural professional, you're no stranger to the challenges posed by invasive species like the jumping worm. These wriggling invaders have made their presence known in 12 out of 14 counties across Vermont, wreaking havoc on soil health and posing perplexing questions from concerned consumers. But there's a light at the end of the tunnel, because VNLA members and allies are rallying together to confront this issue head-on.

At the helm of this collaborative effort stands Professor Josef Gores from the University of Vermont, spearheading the Healthy Soil Collaborative. This interdisciplinary initiative brings together scientists, stakeholders, and activists from across North America with a singular mission: to delve into the ecology, spread, and control of jumping worms.

For VNLA members, soil health isn't just a buzzword—it's a cornerstone of our profession. Jumping worms pose a multifaceted threat to soil composition, pH levels, and nutrient cycles, all of which can undermine plant health and foster susceptibility to invasive species. Compounding the challenge is the absence of approved pesticides for jumping worms, leaving professionals to rely on preventative measures and innovative solutions.

As a frontline defender against jumping worms, your role as a horticultural professional is pivotal. Here are some practical tips to fortify your defenses:

- Regularly clean and sanitize tools and equipment to prevent inadvertent spread.
- Prioritize the use of bare root plants in garden beds whenever feasible.
- Opt for heat-treated soil, compost, and wood chips to minimize the risk of infestation.
- Refrain from using jumping worms for bait or vermicomposting.
- Conduct routine inspections of landscapes for signs of infestation and take swift action if detected.

In the face of challenges like jumping worms, collaboration and proactive measures are paramount. The VNLA invites you to join the ranks in the fight for healthier soils by staying informed, implementing best practices, and sharing knowledge within your community. Together, we can safeguard Vermont's landscapes and cultivate a future rooted in resilience and sustainability.

Dr. Gores and his team were awarded a grant in 2019 to investigate the invasive menace and to shed light on the worm's behavior and control methods. While the battle against jumping worms continues, it's clear that collaboration and vigilance are our best defenses. Let's stand together in our commitment to healthier soils and a greener future.

Article Written by: Professor Josef Gores



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Create an Unfriendly Yard for Ticks & Their Hosts with Landscaping

At the 2024 VNLA Winter Meeting, we shared some landscaping strategies that can help reduce tick encounters. Here is a brief recap of these tips as we head into the time of tick activity and prime landscaping season.

First and foremost, the best way to lower the risk of contracting tick-borne diseases is to focus on **prevention** of tick bites. That means:

1. Check DAILY for ticks on yourself and your pets;
2. Wear protective clothing, including long-sleeve shirts, pants, and pesticide-treated apparel;
3. Use repellents that are registered for use against ticks;
4. Avoid places where ticks commonly occur, esp. areas with shrubs and long grass.

It may seem like ticks are almost everywhere, but there are ways to make yards less attractive to ticks and their hosts, using an **Integrated Tick Management** (ITM) approach. As landscapers, you may want to encourage your clients to adopt these tactics.

Step 1: Maintain plantings around the property to reduce favorable tick habitat by decreasing vegetation density, increasing sun exposure, and reduce humidity.

- Trim tree branches and shrubs around the lawn edge,
- Clear away tall grasses, brush and weeds around homes, lawn edges and stone walls,
- Establish a 3-ft wide wood chip/gravel barrier between lawns and wooded areas and around patios and play equipment.
- Mow lawns frequently,
- Select plants that tolerate dry conditions,
- Avoid planting perennial beds or groundcover along the edge of the lawn,
- Remove leaf litter and clean up plant debris,
- When possible, use xeriscape landscaping practices that encourage dry conditions.

Ticks often live in wooded areas where thrive in moist/humid microclimates, like under the leaf layer around bushes, or low-growing ground cover. Anything done around the yard to lower humidity contributes to reducing tick abundance.

Step 2: Make yards less attractive to tick hosts (deer, rodents, racoons, etc.).

- Remove old furniture, mattresses, trash, and other debris that harbor rodents,
- Stack wood in open and dry areas away from house,
- Seal gaps and holes in stone walls,
- If feeding the birds, place feeding stations away from the home and recreational areas, and remove them in spring and fall, during peak tick activity periods,
- Plant deer resistant plant varieties,
- Remove invasive species,
- Install fencing around the yard to deter deer.



Blacklegged tick, *Ixodes scapularis*, adult, female seeking a host on a flower.

Step 3: Apply EPA registered pesticides to reduce tick populations.

- Only apply pesticides that are specifically registered for ticks,
- Make applications in late-spring/early summer or fall during peak tick activity,
- Target lawn-forest edges and around stone walls,
- Read the label before making any application and follow the instructions.

Several products and formulations are available with synthetic, natural or microbial active ingredients (i.e., bifenthrin, cyfluthrin, carbaryl, pyrethrin, *Metarhizium brunneum* (fungus), etc.) available to commercial applicators and/or homeowners.

Soon landscapers and homeowners will be busy cleaning up yard debris and planting. Alert your landscape crew and clients to check for ticks by saying every day, “**Hey! Don’t Forget to Check Yourself for Ticks!**”

What should you do if you find a tick on your or your pet?

- Remove it immediately using recommended methods with clean tweezers (see the VT Dept. of Health video towards the end of the page [at this link](#)). It is best not to handle ticks with your hands.
- The VT Agency of Agriculture offers free tick identification. The submission form and instructions can be found [HERE](#)
- Contact a doctor if symptoms of disease develop (i.e., fever, chills, malaise, headache, muscle/joint pain, circular rash around the bite site).
- Ticks can also be sent in for testing. It should be noted that positive results don’t necessarily mean transmission occurred, even though you were bitten. There are a few labs that will test your tick for disease-causing pathogens if you choose to (i.e., [Tick Report](#) | [BeBop Labs](#))

For more information about managing ticks in residential backyards and how to protect yourself against tick bites, check out the following links:

- [Create an Unfriendly Yard for Ticks & Their Hosts with Landscaping](#) (Univ. of VT)
- [Preventing Ticks in the Yard](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- [Passive Tick Surveillance Program](#) | Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets
- [Prevent Tick Bites & Tick Bite Illnesses](#) (VT Department of Health)
- [Tick Management Handbook](#) (Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station)

Article written by Dr. Cheryl Sullivan is a Research Assistant Professor and Entomologist (cfrank@uvm.edu; 802-656-5434), and Dr. Margaret Skinner ([mskinner@uvm.edu](mailto:m Skinner@uvm.edu); 802-656-5440) is a Research Professor and the UVM Extension Entomologist, [Entomology Research Laboratory](#). Together, they provide extension outreach to growers and landscapers and conduct research on ITM and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) of pests in various environments.

Our work on ITM and tick outreach is supported in part by the U.S. Geological Survey, Green Works, Univ. of VT College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and Extension System. The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the U.S. Geological Survey. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the U.S. Geological Survey. Univ. of VT and USDA cooperating offer education and employment to everyone without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status.

Under the Lens

A landscaper recently sent a photo asking what the weird bumps were on the twigs of a client's espaliered apple tree. The raised brown bumps are oystershell scale,

Lepidosaphes ulmi, a common and destructive arthropod pest that develops on the bark of a wide range of deciduous trees and shrubs. The most visible form of the pest is the waxy protective covering of the full-grown female that is attached to the bark over the winter. The scale blends in well with the bark and each is about 1/8 inch long and resembles oyster shells. We rarely notice early infestations, but the impacts and the pests become easier to see when they are en masse. The scales feed by sucking plant juices, reducing the vigor of the plant and when heavy infestations are present, the pests can cause limb dieback and even death. The scale-weakened plants can also be more susceptible to canker fungi like ***Cytospora*** spp. Luckily, there is only one generation of the pest per season.



Overwintering oystershell scale on an espaliered apple. Photo by Carrie Chalmers

The pest overwinters as eggs under the old oystershell cover. The eggs hatch in May or early June over the course of a few weeks. The newly emerged "crawlers" are active and mobile, and their goal is to search and find a feeding site within a few days of hatching. During this period, they can also be dispersed by wind or moved by animals before settling down to feed. Once they settle down they lose their legs, become immobile and feed through summer. The scale insects then lay eggs in late summer or early fall and the mother scale dies at the end of the season.

Management of oystershell scale begins in late winter or early spring before the buds open with a dormant oil spray. This organic control is a good way to smother overwintering eggs. The next window for control is when the crawlers are active in late May or June with a lighter weight horticultural oil that will not harm the foliage. Heavily infested branches should be pruned out. The oil sprays may take several years of applications to bring the infestation under control.

Magnolia scale may also be visible this time of year. This larger soft scale (1/2 inch) only attacks magnolias and can be easily seen in the summer due to the large white waxy secretions of the pest or the visible signs of the sooty mold (black fungus) often present on foliage or bark when this pest is feeding. Like the oystershell scale, the most vulnerable stage is the crawler stage. Horticultural oils can be used at the time of crawler emergence (on average from late August through the end of September).



Waxy coating of the magnolia scale. Photo by Morton Arboretum

A few applications may be necessary to target the crawler stage because they have no residual activity, and it is impossible to predict when the crawlers are active without a hand lens. Follow the fall applications with dormant oil sprays in late winter/early spring before the buds open.

Updates on Asian snakeworm or jumping worm

According to Dr. Josef Gorres, UVM researcher studying Asian snakeworm or jumping worm (*Amyntas* spp.), the worms you are seeing in March and April are likely earthworms rather than the jumping worm. However, juvenile jumping worms should be visible in May and June and can be identified by the smooth white clitellum (band) encircling the body and their active characteristic. These worms feed in the upper leaf litter and top few inches of soil and produce castings that look much like large coffee grounds. Jumping worms contribute to forest ecosystem disturbance and can negatively impact soil structure and reduce plant growth.

The snakeworms mainly move in two ways; by moving water or runoff and through the sale of horticultural products like compost, topsoil and container plants. Since there is no legal pesticide for control of these organisms at this point, efforts should be made to prevent them from coming onto your property, and if already present, efforts should be made to limit or slow their spread. There is no practical way to eliminate these pests once they are on your property. Although the adult worms die over the winter, they lay several eggs each season that are very small (2-4 mm), can survive cold winter conditions and drought, are difficult to see and can easily be moved in contaminated pots or shoes, etc.



Asian jumping worm Photo from University of Wisconsin, Madison

To limit the spread in horticultural products, use bare root plants, seed exchanges or rooted cuttings for annual fund-raising plant sales. Buy organic amendments and soil from reputable commercial composters directly, since their attention to heat treatment is killing the worms and their cocoons. If you purchase bags of compost or topsoil, solarize for 2-3 days in full sun on a firm surface so the temperature inside the bag reaches 105 F. This can also be done with larger piles of delivered compost if deposited on a tarped hard surface, spread to 6-8 inches deep and covered with clear plastic like painter's tarp and sealed around the edges so the temperatures inside the sealed compost reach 105 F. Currently, Dr. Gorres is studying the effects of field solarization to see if the population of worms can be diminished on a larger scale.

According to Dr. Gorres, researchers are speculating vegetative barriers may work so he suggested trying a border planting of mixed diverse plants such as wildflowers to discourage the worms from moving onto your land from your neighbor's. Tilling the soil may also aid in discouraging the worms and since the worms like moist soils and organic matter, limiting these may help in discouraging the pests. You can use soapy water to bring worms to the surface to see if you actually have the pest. Dr. Gorres also suggested putting planks or boards on the soil for a few days to bring the worms to the surface. You can handpick and destroy the snakeworms you find, but it would be impossible to eliminate the population this way.

If you are having a pest or disease problem, reach out through email (ann.hazelrigg@uvm.edu) with photos and a description of the damage. We are also happy to look at samples in the UVM Plant Diagnostic Clinic.

Article written by Ann Hazelrigg, UVM Extension

The Impact of Climate Change and Habitat Loss on Horticulture: A Call to Action



The impact of climate change and habitat loss in our natural world has become a topic at the center stage of horticulture, and now, more than ever, our clients and customers are interested in these issues. On a regular basis, it seems that we have private homeowners initiating conversations regarding native species, pollinator gardens, and beneficial species habitat, as well as concerns about invasives and ecological restoration. These are our modern-day horticultural buzz words: the very literal 'birds and the bees.'

Following suit, many of the VNLA (Vermont Nursery & Landscape Association) speakers at our biannual meetings have covered a range of these topics, including meadow management, cultivated plant communities, matrix planting, shoreline conservation, and arguments for the inclusion of native plants. This past summer meeting featured a keynote speaker hailing from The Nature Conservancy: Tom Rogers, the Associate Director of Philanthropy as well as a Certified Wildlife Biologist. His talk focused on the impacts of climate change in our local ecosystems. While the story could easily have been one of only doom and gloom, Tom also spoke on actions that can be taken, as well as what is already being done to support our native flora and fauna. One such exciting anecdote was the brief mention of a private landowner who has acquired a large amount of acreage in Woodstock, VT. This has been done with the intention of conserving the land and eventually producing local seed stock of native plant species for the use of habitat restoration and to increase accessibility of native plant biodiversity for other conservation projects in the region. There was so much interest in this particular project that Tom offered to make an introduction to the owner, Gina Beinecke. After a chat on the phone, Gina graciously offered to answer some questions, with the caveat for our readers that it is still very early days of this undertaking. (Answers have been edited for length and clarity).





So to start with, I think it might be nice to hear a little about you, how you came to work with The Nature Conservancy and what inspired you to take on the land and project you'll be working on.

"I've been passionate about conservation all my life, always tromping through the woods, identifying wildflowers, noting the first robin or when the marsh marigold would bloom. I can remember digging in daffodil bulbs by a small barn with my mother and cutting roses from my grandmother's garden for her kitchen and home. I was Conservation Chair for the North Shore Garden Club in Massachusetts where I started the Lawn to Habitat Project, which worked with town Conservation Committees and Departments of Public Works to choose an appropriate ¼ acre lot of currently mown grass in their town to create a test plot pollinator habitat area. The garden club would purchase the appropriate seed and work with the DPW to create a pollinator habitat area and we provided educational signage to mark the project and explain the importance of planting natives for pollinators and wildlife. We then worked with DPW's to recognize invasive species and treat them in the most ecologically sensitive way possible -- whether that was mulching over with cardboard and compost or spraying with Garlon 3, which is safe for pollinators and amphibians. Through that project, I was asked to become the New England Chair and worked across 5 states to help build north/south pollinator and wildlife corridors in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

The challenges that we learned from in creating habitat were:

1. Finding Material- It was nearly impossible to find native plant material. For several projects, I had to reach all the way out to Prairie Moon Nursery in Minnesota.
2. Biodiversity-In creating seed lists, in-breeding and out-breeding issues came into the discussion and I learned how important the biodiversity within a single native species is. Always so much to learn!
3. Invasive Species- Even if we plant all the perfect habitat plants, we won't achieve our goals if we don't address the invasive species crisis we are facing. We used a variety of approaches, from pulling before they go to seed, laying cardboard and compost over small patches of invasive and spraying Garlon 3, which is safe for amphibians, pollinators and wildlife.

The challenge in finding material is what inspired me to purchase our land in Woodstock, VT and begin this project."

Any notes about the history of the acreage you purchased?

"Blake Hill was originally part of the Rockefeller estate/Billings Farm and over a period of years we've rejoined a number of parcels and now have a mixture of field, forest and wetland over almost 600 acres."

As we know, it is still very early days for this undertaking. Do you have a rough outline or timeline of how you plan to be moving forward?

"It's important to have a good understanding of the habitat restoration needs in New England. Who needs what? Where are there potential funds and grants to support this work? As our climate continues to change, how can a project like this exemplify best practice for the future and the present? Which animals, birds, and insects are we targeting and what plant material will have the highest benefit for them? Who are our partners to accomplish a thriving project? I'm still meeting with people to be sure we know where we're heading, before we begin. By the spring of 2025, I hope to have those answers and partners and begin growing, that would put us into 2026 before we have material for restoration. I have a small greenhouse going in this summer and we're also building our house on the property next summer."

Article Written by: Linzy Vos

Would you say this project has any type of mission statement?

"Our forefathers and mothers unknowingly made some choices that have put us in a predicament. Our climate is warming and creating a waterfall effect of eco-challenges for us to solve. We have invasive species imploding our native ecosystems- Japanese knotweed stealing the space from Joe Pye weed, marsh marigold, asters, and goldenrod that feed our pollinators all season. We have Beech Leaf Nematode, Woolly Adelgid, and Emerald Ash Borer decimating our forests. We absolutely need to be intentional if we are going to pass on lightning bugs, salamanders, turtles, and bumblebees to our children. We each have our shovel and bucket and if we all do something, change will happen. This is wonderful work, as you all already know! The trick will be to find ways to make it profitable to do what we already know is best."

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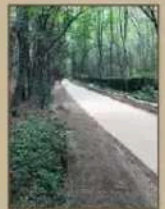
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News from the VT Agency of Agriculture, Foods & Markets

What a wild spring it's been, with big snow dumps then big melt offs, variable temperatures and a grand total eclipse. Let's hope our growing season is not eclipsed (ha ha) by weather events. No floods, no frosts, no bad bugs and no other disasters.

Speaking of bad bugs, spring is a time when many plants are moved all over the country and the world. Be sure to check incoming plants for wee beasties. The VNLA has published information on all of the pests listed here in past issues, so these are just visual reminders of what to watch out for.

The European Cherry Fruit Fly (ECFF) is regulated in the US and host commodities from the Canadian province of Ontario have been restricted since 2021. Due to additional finds of this pest, host commodities from Quebec are now restricted too. In the words of USDA APHIS, "To prevent the introduction of ECFF into the United States, APHIS prohibits entry of fresh fruit of the following host commodities from the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, Canada: black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), mahaleb cherry (*P. mahaleb*), sour cherry (*P. cerasus*), and sweet cherry (*P. avium*). Wild *Prunus spp.* and *Lonicera spp.* fruits are also hosts and, therefore, prohibited." Host commodities from other provinces require verification of origin, like a bill of lading.



Another major nursery pest visitor that has traveled from Canada into the US both via the nursery trade and without human assistance is the box tree moth (BTM). Information about regulatory restrictions and a good photo gallery can be found at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-pests-diseases/box-tree-moth>. For more detailed information about BTM biology, life history and management options, please see <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/box-tree-moth-nprg.pdf>. If you own a nursery or have boxwoods, cherries or honeysuckle, please keep an eye out for these two pests.



The Plant Health team at VAAFM is soliciting help in gathering location data for the Elm zigzag sawfly, *Aproceros leucopoda*. We know this insect has been found in Franklin, Grand Isle and Chittenden counties. If you see the characteristic zigzag damage on elm leaves, please alert Judy Rosovsky judy.rosovsky@vermont.gov, or 802-279-2212. A photo and detailed location information would enable us to confirm the sighting.



It might seem that that all pests emanate from Canada but let me hasten to assure you that the Canadians are as concerned about these plant health threats as we are, and the pests came to Canada from other countries.

The National Plant Board has been making extra efforts to meet with and foster good communication between US states and the Canadian agencies that are responsible for plant health regulations, as those closer connections will help both countries meet plant health threats more effectively.

Canada would like the US to keep the spotted lanternfly (SLF) down our way. All phytosanitary certificates issued for woody plant material to Canada require an additional declaration stating that the plants are free from SLF. SLF nymphs are just starting to hatch in the southern states. Be sure to check any incoming nursery or landscaping material for the grey, mud blob-like SLF egg masses as well as for nymphs.

This April Vermont hosted the 98th Annual Meeting of Eastern Plant Board (EPB). What is the EPB? Each state has a State Plant Regulatory Official, (SPRO) and a State Survey Coordinator (SSC). The SPRO's are the representatives from each state and make up the National Plant Board (NPB, visit the website www.Nationalplantboard.org) and are divided into 4 regions (West, Central, Southern, Eastern).



FIGURE 4. SPOTTED LANTERNFLY NYMPHS, ADULT AND EGG MASSES. PHOTO BY NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

On the federal side state efforts are supported by a Federal employee who is the State Plant Health Director, (SPHD, pronounced spud). Our goal is to work with USDA APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine to safeguard local and US agriculture from invasive plant pests. The SPRO's, SPHD's, SSC's and Plant Protection and Quarantine personnel work together to identify local pest threats and develop surveys and other techniques to find and manage these plant pests.

The VT EPB Annual Meeting was successful; Vermont, the host state, had a record high number of attendees (110) and all 12 states in the Eastern Plant Board region were represented. We had good representation from Canada; they provided a national and regional pest update and participated in the BTM panel and described the potential outcomes of new pest detections. The action-packed agenda included a panel on box tree moths, a review of the health of the maple industry by UVM Extension's Mark Isselhardt, an update from UVM's Dr. Josef Gorres on jumping worms and potential treatments for them and included talks on topical pests such as the Elm Zigzag sawfly, the yellow-legged hornet, a new slug threat from Europe, the rose mosaic virus and the flighted spongy moth complex.

Kim Dean from South Carolina presented on a new hornet, the yellow-legged hornet, (YLH), *Vespa velutina*, that was found in Georgia in 2023. It has since been found in South Carolina, too. This hornet is related to the so-called murder hornet, or Northern Giant Hornet, (NGH), *V. mandarinia*. Like the NGH, the YLH is a threat to honeybees and other pollinators. In Vermont we have another invasive hornet in the same genus, *V. crabro* or the European hornet. The European hornet does attack honeybees and can be seen "hawking" them but does not appear to be as lethal to colonies as its cousins are. Hawking is a behavior where the hornets hover near the beehive and try to capture them. This deters the bees from leaving the hive.

Officials from the state of Georgia found and destroyed five YLH hornet nests. A queen was found later suggesting that the potential for more nests still exists. Chris Looney from Washington State uses radio-tracking the so called "murder" hornets, but those are larger than the YLH. Smaller transmitters have been ordered. Unfortunately the smaller transmitters battery life is limited to about a day. Another problem is that the terrain in the south can have hazards and tracking a hornet through the landscape is challenging. We wish our southern brethren much luck in their endeavors.

Washington State Department of Agriculture has a good set of comparative images of the Northern Giant Hornet (aka the "murder hornet") and its look-a-likes at <https://agr.wa.gov/departments/insects-pests-and-weeds/insects/hornets/identification/ngh-and-look-alikes>.



For comparison, here are images of the three hornets mentioned in this article.

Have a great growing season and if you see anything unusual out there, please let the Plant Health team at VAAFM know.

Article Written by: Judy Rosovsky, VAAFM State Entomologist



LEONARD'S CLIPPINGS!

by Dr. Leonard Perry, UVM Horticulture Professor Emeritus

Each semester I give a course snapshot of the PSS department, reflecting focus and student interest. Here's what is listed as of this writing for this summer session: Home and Garden Horticulture (online, Starrett), Herb Growing, Design and Use (online, Perry), Home Vegetable Growing (online, White), Permaculture (online, White), Fundamentals of Soil Science (lecture/lab, Gorres), Introduction to Beekeeping (online) and Hands-on Beekeeping (lecture/lab, Alger), Plant-based Healing Medicine (online, Elmer), Diversified Farm Operations (lab, Stievater).

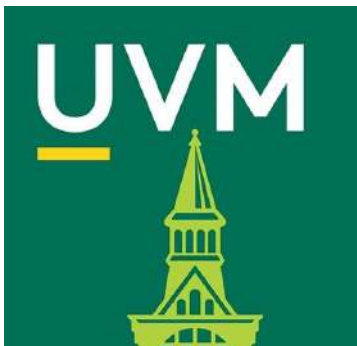
In PSS Department and Campus news:

Beginning this Fall PSS (Plant and Soil Science) will become ALE (Agriculture, Landscape, and Environment). This name change was proposed by the faculty, and approved up the ranks to the Board of Trustees. Hopefully it will more accurately reflect the department focus, future, and attract more students.

Another change that you may (or may not) notice over the coming months, is UVM changing its branding. "The most visible branding tool is the university's logo. Since the early 1990s, UVM's logomark (the icon part of the logo) has been a depiction of the tower of Old Mill, outlined in a rectangular box UVM looks far beyond Vermont's state borders to attract students, faculty members, and research partners—people for whom the outline of a particular building has little meaning.

Going forward, UVM will unify its brand under a refined V logomark outlined by a shield.

Combined with the University's name in a refined typeface, the new logo builds a higher level of brand recognition and distinction." And the new branding statement: **"For individuals committed to a thriving future for people and planet, UVM is the leading university where discovery, creativity, community, and action coalesce to secure a healthier, greener tomorrow."**



For People and Planet

Congratulations to Agroecology and Landscape Design Junior Mari Rosenzweig, who was awarded a summer internship at Longwood Gardens, one of the most prestigious botanical gardens in the country.

If you're somehow not familiar with this garden, I'd add it is one of the most known and important such in the world as well. Check them out online, or better if in the area or are looking for a getaway most any season, check them out in person.

Seasonal displays are incredible, as are the summer fountain shows computer driven and synced to music, illuminated at night. There's plenty there to check out and learn online; I particularly like their behind-the-scenes blogs:

longwoodgardens.org



If you haven't heard of Pantone, they are a global company based in Michigan whose color experts assist designers and producers worldwide in all things color. Based on trends and research, they identify a Pantone Color of the Year which influences color choices from furnishings to fashions and gets extensive publicity. It makes sense then that our industry might want to take a ride with all this publicity in plant choices for sales and designs. For 2024 their color of the year is Pantone 13-1023 Peach Fuzz. You have to love their description: "Peach Fuzz captures our desire to nurture ourselves and others. It's a velvety gentle peach tone whose all-embracing spirit enriches mind, body, and soul."

In seeking a hue that echoes our innate yearning for closeness and connection, we chose a color radiant with warmth and modern elegance. A shade that resonates with compassion, offers a tactile embrace, and effortlessly bridges the youthful with the timeless." So to translate this to plants with peachy flowers that you might consider, here are a few ideas (thanks to Paul Pilon, Perennial Pulse newsletter, and to the source nurseries listed for photos). All are listed hardy to zone 4, unless noted.

Echinacea (coneflower) SUPREME 'Cantaloupe' (Terra Nova Nurseries) has "young flowers look like a brown eyed, double Gerbera and are excellent as a cut flower. As the flowers expand, they take on a more "Echinacea-like" look and last and last and last." (As a note, keep in mind that such pom-pom like flowers have been sown to not be as attractive to pollinators as those more resembling the native colors and shapes.)

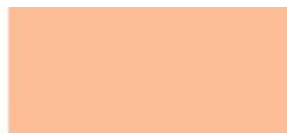
Achillea (yarrow) 'Firefly Peach Sky' (Walter's Gardens) "differ from other yarrow due to their taller nature without compromising beautiful habits and sturdiness. Light peachy orange flowers age to yellow. Mature and new flowers create a blend of colors, much like you would find on a peach fruit." (zone 3)

Heuchera (coralbells) 'Peachberry Ice" Primo series (Proven Winners/Walters Gardens) "bright orange color is most pronounced in the spring with newly emerging foliage, over the warmer months the color mellows. Burgundy stems hold airy, cream flowers." The large (4½-5"), apricot orange leaves have a silver overlay and bright pink undersides. This series is larger and faster growing than the Dolce series

Coreopsis verticillata (tickseed) Crème Caramel (Darwin Perennials) has peach-pink flowers with gold tones, deepening to a salmon with cooler temperatures. Similar to others in the species it has a mounded habit, fine foliage, is long blooming much of the summer, attractive to pollinators, and good for cut flowers. (zone 5a)

Sedum telephium (stonecrop) 'Peach Pearls' (Terra Nova Nurseries) has burgundy leaves, rose-colored flowers late summer, a dense habit, is attractive to pollinators, and needs minimal water once established.

Some other peachy choices to consider are **Agastache** Honeysticks Ember and Peachy Keen, **Alcea** Peaches N' Dreams, **Digitalis** Dalmatian Peach, and **Dianthus** Sunflor Cody.



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Peach Fuzz





Plants of the Year....

In the last issue I mentioned the National Garden Bureau's (ngb.org) selections of plants of the year. In addition, each year Proven Winners selects a perennial from its offerings to feature as the National Perennial of the Year, which for 2024 is **Salvia** Pink Profusion. Pink Profusion is a **Salvia nemorosa** hybrid with dark pink flowers produced on even darker pink calyxes. The impressive flower displays are held atop its near perfectly rounded dense habit. It's a great rebloomer and will rebloom several times throughout the summer when the spent flowers are cut back. Hardy to Zone 3. (thanks to Paul Pilon, Perennial Pulse, for this description and photo)



The Perennial Plant Association members choose a perennial they feel worthy of more promotion and recognition, and their PPA Perennial of the Year for 2024 is **Phlox paniculata** 'Jeana'. With a long bloom period of lavender pink flowers, reaching 3 to 5 feet tall and 3 to 4 feet wide, hardy to zone 3, and with high powdery mildew resistance, it is worthy of this recognition. In trials at the Mt. Cuba Center in Delaware, 'Jeana' attracted more butterflies than any other phlox. Other pollinators and hummingbirds like it too. 'Jeana' was discovered growing along the Harpeth River near Nashville, Tennessee and was named for its discoverer, Jeana Prewitt. (thanks to perennialplant.org for these facts and photo, and you can find more there). Having grown this myself in zone 4, for 8 years, I can attest that it is an awesome late season pollinator magnet. It has spread nicely to about 3 to 4ft and withstood extreme weed pressure—a true survivor.

Article Written by: Leonard Perry, UVM Horticulture Professor Emeritus



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THE IDEA FACTORY

tips & trends, food for thought...

American Horticultural Society Announces Winners of the 2024 Great American Garden Awards

Since 1953, the American Horticultural Society's Great American Gardeners Awards has been a beacon of recognition for individuals and organizations who have demonstrated exceptional achievements in various realms of horticulture, including plant research, garden stewardship, and horticultural outreach and teaching.

In 2024, the AHS proudly honors six such individuals and organizations with the prestigious 2024 Great American Gardeners Awards, celebrating their invaluable contributions to the world of horticulture and gardening. You can read more about the awards here:

<https://ahsgardening.org/2024-great-american-gardeners-awards/>



2024 Garden Trends Report: Embracing Eco-Optimism

The [2024 Garden Trends Report](#) presents seven trends united by the theme of Eco-Optimism, highlighting the green industry's potential to positively impact the environment. With an innovative navigation system based on distinct personas, readers can easily explore trends that resonate with their preferences, empowering individuals to take steps towards a more sustainable future through gardening.

Through prioritizing native plants, rethinking traditional lawns, and embracing food gardening, individuals can make meaningful contributions to sustainability. The report's personalized exploration of trends offers hope and inspiration, encouraging everyone to play a part in creating a greener, more vibrant world for generations to come.

Top ten plant and fungal species named new to science in 2023

In a continuous quest for discovery, scientists from the Royal Botanic Gardens (RBG), Kew, alongside international collaborators, have unveiled their annual selection of the top 10 newly described plant and fungi species in 2023. This initiative underscores the ongoing efforts within the scientific community to document and understand the biodiversity of our planet. To delve deeper into the fascinating discoveries and learn about the remarkable species that made the list, read more here:

<https://ahsgardening.org/2024-great-american-gardeners-awards/>





STRICTLY BUSINESS

no kidding ...

Many of my readers remember JPL. Jean Paul Lamarche. The North American Landscape Industry guru on overhead recovery. A brilliant math genius. A passionate landscape designer and contractor. One of our professions' all-time top mentors on landscape business profitability, production rates, pricing and retail success. JPL passed away several years ago. He was my mentor, and my good friend.

Every winter, I spend most of my time coaching business owners on improving profit. And, I deploy JPL's formulae weekly if not daily – mentoring landscapers on simple math – and it's actually not that painful. I realize that many if not most of you have settled on your 2023 pricing, hourly charge out rates, equipment day rates, wages and salaries to staff etc. Many have sent out contracts months or weeks ago. What I also know is that there's going to be lots of new business come your way this year – new customers, new accounts, new referrals and new employees. My question to you is: Will you price your newly acquired work as the season wears on the same as the work you've already sold now?

There are many different ways to determine what to charge and what to pay staff. Some business owners use what I refer to as the 'dartboard method', which deploys a mixture of guess work, intuition and knowing how to stay below the competition on price. Others use budgeting software – which can be either a very valuable tool to support profitable pricing, or a weapon to destroy it if not properly used. 'Pie in the sky' budgeting can be more disastrous than no budget at all – because it gives a false sense of success that never materializes. Some business owners use spreadsheets which track recent and projected Sales / Costs Of Goods Sold / Overhead – line by line – to determine best predictions on profit margins.

It always amazes me at how much variation there is to the methodology, and related success. Unfortunately for many – figuring out how important both proper budgeting and overhead recovery methods are – comes too late, and the business closes down. And also, I am amazed every year at how hard working many business owners are – year after year, without decent profit or return on their investment.

So, I thought I would share a few classic JPL 'aha' moments for you to consider going into this year's pricing strategy on 'markup' and recovering overhead.

Starting with 'mark up' here's an example. Let's say you have materials and labour on a small project that in total cost you \$1000. Labour, Labour Burden, Materials (Cost of Goods Sold or COGS) plus overhead recovery. And you want a 20% profit, so you'd likely 'mark it up' 20%.

If I handed you a calculator, and asked you to add 20% profit to those costs most typically take $\$1000 \times 1.2 = \1200 as the price to the customer. Right? Does that give you a 20% profit? Nope.

It gives you only 16.7% profit. ($\$1000/\$1200 = .833$ as the cost of the materials, which means $.167 \times 100$ or 16.7% is profit)

You just left 3.3% profit on the table. When most landscape companies average 2-3% profit (as reported by LMN), that's a problem. The proper way to calculate 'profit' added to Costs of Goods Sold is this:

$\$1000 / .8 = \1250 as the price to the customer. $\$1,000 / \$1250 = 20\%$. Why divide by '.8'? Well, 100% minus the 20% desired profit = 80%. So if you divide by 80%, what's left is the 20% you're seeking. Look at the numbers here..... 1000 is 80% of 1250.



Right? Right!

So if you use a multiplier of 1.2 to get a 'profit mark up' of 20% on a \$1000 COGS job – you left \$50 on the table. If it's a \$10,000 COGS job – that's \$500 out of your pocket – if it's a 100,000 job COGS , that's \$5000 profit you thought you'd priced in your 'markup' but didn't by using a multiplier of '1.2'.

If you want 10% profit, divide your \$1000 project costs (including overhead) by .90 = \$1,111 price to the customer.

If you want 15% profit, divide your \$1000 project costs (including overhead) by .85 = \$1176 price to the customer.

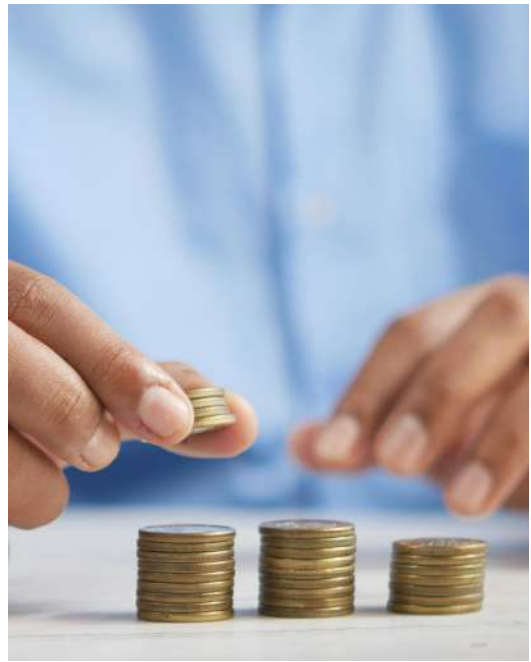
If you want 25% profit, divide your \$1000 project costs (including overhead) by .75 = \$1333 price to the customer.

I think you get my drift here. While the difference seems small – think of a company with \$500,000 in sales, with overhead properly recovered (see this column next month) and looking for a desired profit of 15%:

With the incorrect 'profit markup', $\$500,000 \times 1.15 = \$575,000$. With correct profit margin calculated, $\$500,000 / .85 = \$588,235$. On \$500,000 in sales, \$13,235 is left hanging in the breeze, not in your bank account. That's 2.65% more profit just by pricing correctly for the profit you thought you were going to get. That's the hairy edge margin that many companies surf between break even and having enough money to get through the winter and keep going.

I hope that instead of managing disappointment at the end of this upcoming landscaping season, you'll be happier with profit, by using the right math to calculate the profit you're after.

Article Written by: Jackie Hart



Bareroot plants

Field and gravel-bed grown

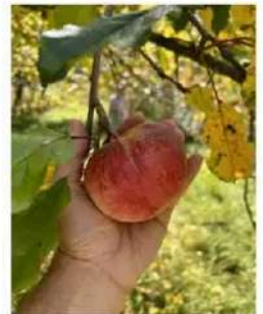
Fruit trees

Berry plants & natives

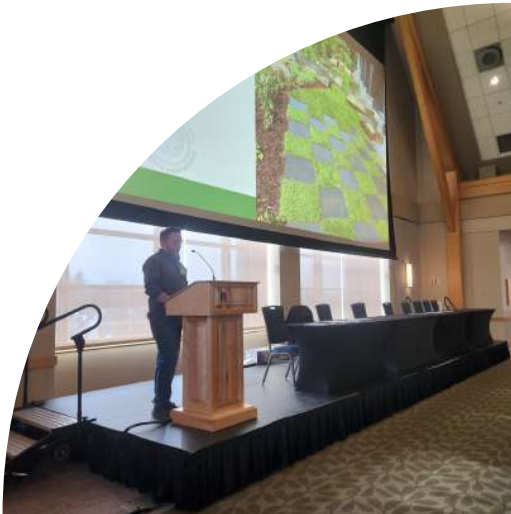
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