

THE DIRT

Summer Issue 2026, Volume 52, Issue 2



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A Closer Look at VT's New Plant Rule page 24

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Gabe Bushey, Church Hill Landscapes, Inc.

**Dear Fellow VNLA Members,
Colleagues, & Friends,**

Here we are in the dog days of summer. This is the time of year where the temps are up and we are all pushing through our workload. We have all survived the spring madness and are settled into our routines. I hope all of you are finding time to rest and maybe even step away from work on occasion. As I write this we are about to have another heat wave. Stay safe out there.

I want to use my letter this issue as a welcome to our new executive director Maureen Cregan Connolly. Along with the rest of the board, I am very excited to have her on board. I want to start by giving you all some background on our hiring process and then tell you a bit about Maureen.

As a board we had gone through this process a couple of years ago so we had a framework this time around. We started by advertising the position in March posting the position in Seven Days Newspaper, Front Porch Forum, and the Daybreak newsletter. Concurrent to that we formed a hiring committee composed of myself, and board members Linzy Vos, Bruce Gagne, and Tanya Retz along with Kristina facilitating, organizing, and answering questions along the way. Thank you so much to those four and the rest of the board for all of their work.

We had over 23 applicants of which we selected 10 for interviews based on their resumes and cover letters. I will say that the pool of applicants was impressive and a step up from before. Of those first interviewees, we selected 4 for a second round. It came down to two people and after a final in-person interview we decided on Maureen.

Maureen rose to the top with her knowledge, ideas, goals, and most of all experience. You can read her more about Maureen on page 4, but a small sample of her experience is that she was the executive officer for the Home Builders and Remodelers Association. This directly applicable experience and the fact that she was very successful in that role gives me great confidence that we are in good hands moving forward. Maureen and Kristina will be working side-by-side over these next months during this transition period.

I ask that everyone take the opportunity to welcome her into the nursery and landscape family. She is looking forward to diving into the work.

All my best



Gabe Bushey, VNLA President.



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**Cover Photo Credit:
Kristina MacKulin.**

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THE BUZZ

the low down on what's up!

Meet the New VNLA Executive Director - Maureen Cregan Connolly

As of July 1, Maureen Cregan Connolly is the newly appointed Executive Director of the Vermont Nursery and Landscape Association (VNLA), the leading voice for nurseries, landscape businesses, garden centers and allied Vermont businesses. In this role, Maureen provides leadership focused on organizational growth, sound fiscal stewardship, member engagement, and industry advocacy.

With more than 30 years of executive leadership experience in both non-profit and private-sector organizations, Maureen has built a career centered on helping organizations thrive, strengthening partnerships and delivering sustainable results. Before joining the VNLA, she served as Executive Officer of the Vermont Builders and Remodelers Association (VBRA), where she led initiatives that strengthened the association's financial performance, increased member engagement, improved operational effectiveness, and elevated advocacy efforts for Vermont's building industry.



Maureen's expertise includes financial management, budgeting, forecasting, revenue growth, process improvement, organizational development and strategic planning. She is recognized for her collaborative leadership style, thoughtful decision-making, and ability to guide organizations through growth and change while building strong relationships with boards of directors, members, industry leaders, and community partners.

She holds an Associate of Arts degree in Interior Design, graduating magna cum laude from Brooks College in Long Beach, California.

Outside of her professional responsibilities, Maureen enjoys cultivating her perennial gardens, being enthusiastically "trained" by her Border Collie/Great Pyrenees mix Ezra, and spending time with her daughter, who lives in Southern California.

Welcome Maureen!



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CONGRATULATIONS AMANDA AND MATT!

2026 VNLA Board Meeting Dates

September 16, 2026

November 19, 2026

January 7, 2027

Board meeting are from 9:30am-3:30 pm; locations to be determined.

Please contact the VNLA office to confirm.

The 2026 VNLA Summer Meeting - We're Back at Shelburne Farms!

by Kristina MacKulin

The VNLA's Summer Meeting & Trade Show is fast approaching! We will be gathering at **Shelburne Farms Coach Barn on August 27, 2026** for the day. Here is a quick list of the day's happenings:

- Keynote speaker Jason Rathe, founder and majority owner of Field Outdoor Spaces, Minneapolis, MN, will be presenting: **"Landscaping and the Golden Era"**.
- Time to visit with vendors throughout the day.
- VNLA Special Membership Meeting (read the Bylaws notice [HERE](#)).
- VNLA Annual Summer Auction - bring along an item to donate if you can!
- On-site tour with Jess Rubin, Mycoevolve of a long-term restoration project at Shelburne Farms whose goal was to restore degraded riparian forested buffers.
- Emily May, Xerces Society will speak about "Pollinator-friendly Landscapes".
- Emilie Inoue from the VT Agency of Agriculture Foods & Markets Plant Health Team will be providing updates and info on the new Regulated Introduced Plant Species Rule that went into effect 6/16/26.
- Opportunity to take the VCH exam.

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We hope to see you there. You can visit the website [HERE](#) to read more about the schedule, learn more about the speakers, and to register. The registration deadline is **August 10, 2026**.

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Summer Twilight Gatherings Recap

by Kristina MacKulin

We have held three twilight tours so far this season and have been super happy with the turnout. On **June 4th** Paul Wiczorek led a tour at **Lincoln Hill Botanical Gardens** for members and friends on a very lovely evening. Records were broken with 58 in attendance!

In 2025, Paul conceived the idea of opening his private gardens to the public during weekends in May and June and also by appointment. Paul's gardens represent over 40 years of plant collecting, cultivating, and designing. The gardens are located in Hinesburg on a partially



The Lincoln Hill Botanical Garden tour begins.

wooded hillside at 1,000 feet. The gardens are home to one of the largest collections of Rhododendrons and Azaleas and some beautiful Mountain Laurel's are the icing on the cake.

Paul's gardens also boast an extensive collection of conifers, herbaceous woodland plants and alpine, all of which is integrated into a couple of acres. You can read

more about the gardens and their history [HERE](#). If you were unable to attend put these gardens on your bucket list for sure.



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We are very grateful to Paul for sharing his gardens and plant knowledge with us.

Next on **July 9th** and somehow skirting torrential rain/storms, we held our next Twilight Gathering Tour at **Rocky Dale Gardens**, we were hosted by Ed Burke and team members David Flaschenriem, Amy Olmsted, Karen Krajacic, Linzy Vos, and Robin Andresen.

Rocky Dale Gardens was founded by Holly and Bill Weir in 1981. Their passion for plants was undeniable and they specialized in growing unusual confers, heathers, alpenes and woodland plants. They were real pioneers when it came to horticulture and garden design back in those days and became icons in the business.

Twenty years flew by and they decided to put the business up for sale, taking their time to find the right person. In 2004 Ed Burke returned to Vermont and purchased Rocky Dale. Ed began his horticulture career in Minnesota founding a gardening business in 1985 called Phillips Garden, which he continued to own and manage until just recently.

Ed and his team, over the past 22 years, picked up the Rocky Dale torch and ran with it. The gardens have been renovated over the years and continue to be to this day, as we saw on the tour. The plant collections have remained unique and interesting. Ed shared:

"Honestly, it's really remarkable to own this property. Most of these trees are 35 to 40 years old, because the nursery is 45 years old this year -- which I can't believe, because I've been here half that time. And I look at photos of when I first got here. And I can't believe how these trees have grown since I've been here. Can't keep up with it, but I think right now, I'm happy. I'm happy with what it looks like. Just look at this!"

We had 42 people join us for the evening and we thank Ed and the team for sharing their time and expertise.



Above: Lincoln Hill Botanical Garden.

Below: Rocky Dale Gardens tour photos.

Photo credits: Kristina MacKulin and Cheryl Dorschner.



Our third Summer Twilight was held on **July 16th** at the **UVM Plant Diagnostic Clinic** located in Jeffords Hall. Ann Hazelrigg, UVM Extension Plant Pathologist and Director of the Clinic led the tour. While it was a small group who were able to attend, Ann shared her over 40 years of pest and disease knowledge with the group. Ann also had live specimens on hand. Ann will be retiring in the Fall and we are really going to miss her. It was recently announced she will be inducted into

Vermont's Agriculture Hall of Fame and received the 2026 Lifetime Achievement award in August. Congratulations to Ann and we appreciate her time and expertise she continues to share with VNLA members and beyond. Please see the feature article on page 11.

Looking ahead, our next **Summer Twilight Gathering** will be on **August 19, 2026** from 6-7:30pm. We will be taking **Rain Garden Tours** of 3 downtown Burlington locations: City Hall Park, Saint Paul Street, and a residential site located on S. Union Street. This tour is being led by

Michelle Lockhart of BLUE BTW Stormwater Program, Jill Brazen from the Lake Champlain Sea Grant, Amelia McClure, Burlington's Stormwater Specialist, Amy Houghton of Wagner Hodgson Landscape Architecture, Lucas Goldfluss of the Winooski NRCD, and Megan Epler Wood, property owner. This will be a great opportunity to learn from the experts. You can read more and RSVP [HERE](#).

After that, the next late summer twilight gathering will be held on **September 9th** at Middlebury

College for a deep dive into sports turf management hosted by Tim Parsons, head horticulturist and Chris Kneale from the Tom Irwin Corporation. The Middlebury athletic crew will be showing off their fields and equipment. We will let you know when this event gets posted, along with the rest of the Fall season's schedule.





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The VNLA Plastic Pot Recycling Program

If you missed the July drop-off weeks to recycle your #2 and #5 plastic pots, there are 4 more weeks to go! One of our locations collected six carts full that Prides Corner Farms will be picking up and will eventually make its way to Jordan Plastics. The drop off locations are:

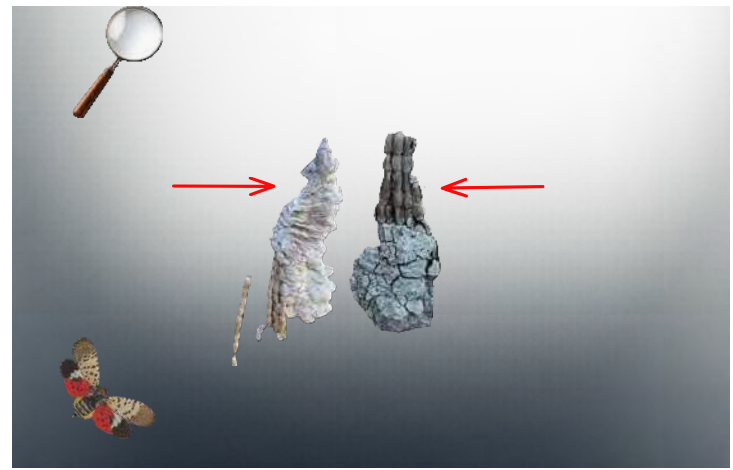


- Evergreen Gardens | Waterbury Center
- Glebe Mountain Gardens & Landscapes | Londonderry
- Greenhaven Gardens & Nursery | New Haven
- Horsford Gardens & Nursery | Charlotte

The drop off schedule for the rest of the season is:

- August 10- 14, 2026
- August 17 – 21, 2026
- September 14 – 18, 2026
- September 21 – 25, 2026

You can read about the program [HERE](#). Mark your calendars for the drop off dates and start saving your pots!



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Ann Hazelrigg to Retire September 1st from UVM - Plant Diagnostic Clinic will Continue

by Cheryl Dorschner

Most of us grumble when spam fills our email inboxes or advertising and unexpected bills land among our snail mail. But Ann Hazelrigg gives new meaning to the term “snail mail.” Vermonters have sent her slime, blue-green algae, live worms, diseased plants, and fresh weeds. She welcomes, even relishes, this.

“One of the craziest things I received was these, long, white, fuzzy things. The client was convinced they were chemtrails,” said Ann of a debunked conspiracy theory that the contrails against blue skies produced by jets are, instead, purposefully placed toxic chemicals on earth. “The fuzzy strings were actually cottonwood seed pods.”

Ann is a plant pathologist, UVM Extension professor, and director of the Plant Diagnostic Clinic. The latter is Vermont's resource for the green industry and home gardeners to identify and manage diseases, insects and weeds. She even has a drop-box outside of the clinic door at 206 Jeffords Hall on the University of Vermont campus.

Twilight Meet-Up

That's where she invited Vermont Nursery & Landscape Association (VNLA) members after hours on Thursday, July 16 to tour the lab, learn her process and identify recent samples. She showed some that clients had delivered and others she had collected. It was easy to see the importance of clients submitting a full root-to-tip plant specimen and thorough accompanying information in order for her to give back as much information and diagnoses as possible.

Ann knows well the common issues that turn up annually, has a considerable reference library and a powerful microscope. She cultures samples of most specimens and within about three days the fruiting bodies on the cultures display the identifying factors. *“We try to get answers back to people within a few days, and if we need more time we tell them,”* Ann explained.

And as VNLA members know well, she's always on the look-out for the next big thing to cross the border into Vermont. UVM's



UVM Extension Professor Ann Hazelrigg will retire Sept. 1 after a 43-year UVM career that includes overseeing the Plant Diagnostic Clinic, IPM & Vermont Master Gardener programs. The clinic is Vermont green industry's top resource for identifying plant diseases, insect pests, and weed issues and giving advice based on IPM principles.

Plant Diagnostic Clinic is one of a network of labs at all of the state land-grant universities. That network is yet another handy tool.

Over Ann's four-decade career, she says that she has seen changes beyond just the longer seasons but from the effects of climate change.

“Those are also the reasons why mine is such a great job. I tell our students, you'll never get rich, but it's interesting. There are a lot of issues out there that need to be solved, and there will always be a need for plant pathologists.”

Resource to Growers Since the '80s

Ann came to the University of Vermont in the early 1980s after earning degrees from Cornell and Colorado State Universities where she specialized in plant pathology, pomology and horticulture. While she started at UVM

working in crops, in 1984 when the university created the Plant Diagnostic Clinic she moved into a role there.

That's also when she began collaborating with what was then known as the Vermont Association of Landscape Professionals. It turns out that the biggest users of plant diagnostic services are Vermont's fruit and berry growers, Ann says. Second are landscapers and nursery growers followed by home gardeners. She often spoke to these groups on the potential for diseases in the state. And every year since, she's been alerting Association members and the public on what insects and diseases to expect. Her reports and predictions are delivered in VNLA summer and winter meetings, member emails and columns in the Association's quarterly publication, *The Dirt*, as well as delivering seminars at six of the VNLA's Vermont Flower Shows.

While working her way to greater career responsibilities at UVM, Ann earned her PhD in 2015. In addition, she conducts federally-funded scientific research, oversees Extension's E-IPM and Pesticide Education and Safety programs. And she oversees staff and volunteers of the Vermont Master Gardener Program. She is chair of the National IPM Coordinating Committee and a member of VNLA. She lives and gardens in Williston.





Plant pathologist Ann Hazelrigg explains how she diagnoses plant diseases at the UVM Plant Diagnostic Clinic where she hosted a VNLA-members' Twilight Tour July 16. Members did well when quizzed on diseased samples! Photo credit: Cheryl Dorschner.

That's All Folks

On September 1, after 43 years, Ann Hazelrigg, 71, will retire from UVM.

"It has been wonderful to get to know and work with Ann during my time at the VNLA. She has been our go-to resource, active colleague and friend throughout her career at UVM," says Kristina MacKulin, VNLA executive director for 22 years. "And we trust that will continue. Her column – Under the Lens – which appears in our quarterly publication, The Dirt, has kept our members informed and up-to-date on landscape pests and diseases. Ann has never hesitated to take the deep dive into helping our members solve plant issues. We will miss Ann in her role at UVM, but we hope to continue working together in new ways."

VNLA is blessed that so many landscape, nursery, industry and education professionals continue to call Vermont their home after they retire, and they become the foundation and the brain trust of the Vermont Nursery & Landscape Association. Access to these experts and mentors is one of the member benefits.

On September 2, Ann will be recognized with a lifetime achievement award for her *"significant contribution to Vermont agriculture."* She is one of five 2026 inductees into the **Vermont Agricultural Hall of Fame** headquartered at the Champlain Valley Exposition in Essex Junction. Since its founding in 2003, the Ag Hall of Fame has recognized the achievements of more than 120 farmers, growers, professionals, service providers and advocates who have helped strengthen Vermont's agricultural community.

"Ann is highly responsive, cares deeply about helping farmers and gardeners be successful," said her colleague Vern Grubinger in nominating her for this award. *"And she shares her wealth of knowledge widely by translating technical concepts into forms that*

people can easily use." Vern is the vegetable and berry specialist with University of Vermont Extension, and coordinator of the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program.

Smooth Transition?

At this writing, the University of Vermont had not begun advertising for a plant pathologist professor, which is expected to become a tenure-track position. Ann is finishing a three-year federal grant to study plant genetics. She said she's willing to work part-time to oversee grants and help with a smooth transition. Meanwhile, current staff are in place to continue, uninterrupted, both the Plant Diagnostic Clinic and the Vermont Master Gardener Program.

About the Author:

VNLA member **Cheryl Dorschner** was a long-time gardening columnist for the Burlington Free Press and Gannett News Service, writer and editor at several newspapers, national magazines and book publishers, director of the Flynn Garden Tour and many other garden travel tours and events. She organized the seminars and workshops for the 2023 and 2025 Vermont Flower Shows.



How to Use UVM Plant Diagnostic Services

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www.uvm.edu/extension/plant-diagnostic-clinic

Ann's Top Plant Pathology References

For professionals who want to increase their own library Ann Hazelrigg recommends:

- Westcott's Plant Disease Handbook by Cynthia Westcott, Springer Science & Business Media, 7th Edition, 2008.
- Diseases of Trees and Shrubs by Wayne A. Sinclair & Howard H. Lyon, Cornell University Press. Second Revised Edition, 2005.
- Insects that Feed on Trees and Shrubs by Warren T. Johnson & Howard H. Lyon, Cornell University Press. Second Revised Edition, 1991.





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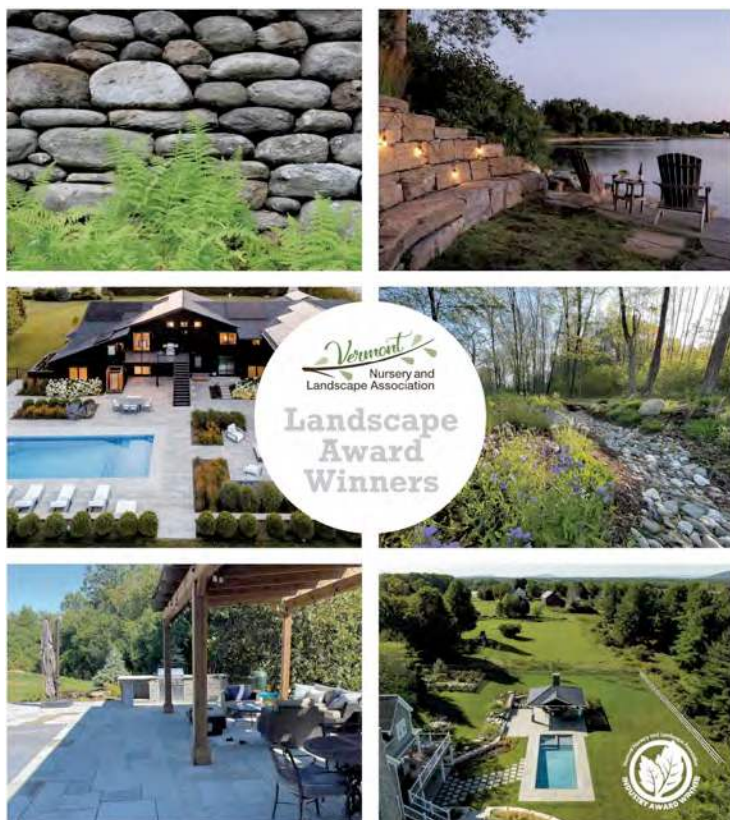
Vermont DEC is now accepting applications for a major clean-energy funding opportunity through the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust. A total of \$5.9 million is available to help replace or repower older diesel vehicles and equipment with all-electric alternatives, reducing emissions across Vermont's working landscape.

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August 18-20, 2026

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August 27, 2026

VNLA Summer Meeting & Trade Show

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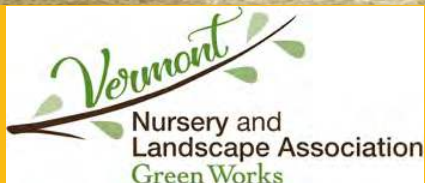


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LEONARD'S CLIPPINGS!

by Dr. Leonard Perry, UVM Horticulture Professor Emeritus

Summer, 2026

Agriculture, Landscape & Environment ALE (formerly PSS) Department and Campus news:



even if you went to UVM in the past before these hires, I thought it might be of interest to get to know the names behind the ALE (former PSS)

department. This time, however, I'll focus not on a department member but **Heather Darby** (left) who has been an affiliate of PSS (now ALE) in the past.

Heather is a UVM Extension Professor, and Faculty Fellow of the UVM Gund Institute for Environment. She received her Ph.D. from Oregon State University, M.S. from University of Wisconsin-Madison, and B.S. from University of New Hampshire. Her areas of expertise are soil quality and nutrient management, grain production, organic farming, forages, hops, and oilseed crops.

From Heather: *"I am an Agronomic and Soils Specialist for the University of Vermont Extension. I was raised on a dairy farm in Northwest Vermont. This has allowed me to play an active role in all aspects of dairy farming and gain knowledge of the land. These practical experiences, complemented by my education have focused my attention towards sustainable agriculture and promotion of environmental stewardship. My research interests and outreach programs are in the areas of fuel, forage, and grain production systems in New England."*

You can learn more at the website of the Northwest (VT) Soils and Crops Program (<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/nwcrops>).

- I was fortunate over years past to visit the **perennial trials at the Chicago Botanic Gardens of Richard Hawke**—



arguably one of, if not the, top such trials in the northern hemisphere (photo courtesy <https://www.chicagobotanic.org>). He has published many results which are totally worth checking out if you're at all interested in perennials. And, if ever in the Chicagoland vicinity, try to check out this gardens and these trials. (<https://www.chicagobotanic.org/collections/ornamental-plant-research/plant-evaluation>)



- Related is the **perennials breeding program** at the Chicago Botanic Gardens, directed and managed by another name worth knowing in the perennials industry, Dr. James Ault. Among the several genera he has spent his career with are the *Baptisia*. (the following photo and background is courtesy of WaltersGardens.com)

- **Faculty Feature:** Since most reading this may not know the above faculty names with courses,



“As an avid gardener, Dr. Jim Ault has long admired and grown Baptisia australis. In the mid-1990s, he read a 1940s monograph on Baptisia by Mary Larisey in which she described the species and natural hybrids all native to North America. Dr. Ault realized that horticulture lacked many of these naturally occurring forms and made it his goal to introduce hybrids of them to horticulture.

Over a period of about ten years, he worked to combine the best traits of the various species and hybrids to develop garden worthy Baptisia plants with unique combinations of flower color, plant habits, and vigor. His efforts produced the PRAIRIEBLUES™ series including: SOLAR FLARE PRAIRIEBLUES™ and TWILITE PRAIRIEBLUES™.

Currently, Dr. Ault is the Director of Ornamental Plant Research at the Chicago Botanic Garden. Through the Chicagoland Grows® program, he has also introduced the Meadowbrite™ series of Echinaceas, which are bred for their unique flower color and form. As well as Phlox ‘Violet Pinwheels’ (PP25884), a compact hybrid groundcover phlox.”

Here are three of their recent good Baptisia introductions, part of the Chicagoland Grows® Collection. (<https://www.chicagobotanic.org/collections/ornamental-plant-research/chicagoland-grows-plant-introduction>) Photos/details here courtesy of plantsnouveau.com—a premier plant introduction site worth checking out if you don’t know of it.

You’ll see PP with a number for these, as well as elsewhere in some plant descriptions. This refers to “**Plant Patent**” and the number, which you can look up (patents.google.com) for ALL the details on the plant, from breeding or origin to all the botany.

Baptisia ‘Solar Flare’. Tall, upright flower spikes glow with bi-color



blooms that shift from bright yellow to rusty orange. Strong, vertical, and impossible to miss in borders or mixed plantings. (PP20408)

Baptisia ‘Royal Purple’® Love deep color? Royal Purple delivers saturated,



jewel-toned amethyst flowers on tall, vertical stalks. Think species baptisia—turned up to eleven. (PP25508)

Baptisia ‘Lunar Eclipse’. A cool-color



favorite with long, full flower spikes that open deep cornflower blue and fade to white, creating a stunning ombré effect on every stem. (PP25875)

Now for the not-so-pretty, but important to know **hosta diseases** if you sell or use this most popular perennial. (See previous issue of *The Dirt*. Below is courtesy of Paul

Pilon, Perennial Pulse newsletter, Ball Publ.)

“Hosta are susceptible to several leaf spot diseases, but Colletotrichum (Anthracnose) and Cercospora are the most common leaf spot pathogens observed on hosta. It’s also not uncommon for more than one foliar pathogen to be present at a time...”



Foliar leaf spot diseases will only occur when the leaves are wet for long durations. There are a number of ways this can happen—early morning irrigations, watering multiple times each day, watering during cloudy conditions, extended periods of rain and even dew events. In most cases, I find it’s a combination of watering too early in the day in conjunction with watering during cloudy conditions.

Foliar leaf spots on hostas can generally be prevented altogether simply by managing (decreasing) the time the leaves stay wet. Water later in the day to allow the leaves to dry quickly, avoid late day irrigations and don’t water during cloudy conditions. There are a number of effective fungicides that can be applied on a preventative basis. Fungicides are most effective when applied before or just as foliar pathogens are observed.

If you observe foliar leaf spots this summer, there’s a greater chance they’ll also occur next year several weeks after the plants wake up from dormancy. If you see



leaf spots this fall, I highly recommend you make a couple of fungicide applications after the hostas wake up next year. The first application should be just after the leaves are fully expanded and again three to four weeks later.”

You can download (for free) a 16pp booklet from Iowa State on Hosta Diseases and Pests (<https://shop.iastate.edu/extension/home-garden/lawn-and-garden/pests-and-diseases/sul14.html>)

Ending this article, and switching focus from perennials to trees, a study in Charlottesville, Virginia showed that **preserving mature trees can generate long-term financial returns.**

Study findings showed that preserving the trees would generate a 25-year return on investment of 25.8%, significantly exceeding the long-term average returns typically associated with the S&P 500.

Preserving the four mature oak trees would create a 25-year *Net Present Value (NPV)* of approximately \$304,000, compared to only \$1,500 for newly planted replacement trees, or a negative economic impact of roughly \$40,000 over the same 25-year period.

The financial benefits stem from several factors, including increased property values, ecosystem services and enhanced commercial activity associated with mature tree canopy. The *mature trees contributed an immediate 4% premium to the assessed property value*, compared to only a 0.5% premium from newly planted replacement trees. According to the study, a newly planted tree may take between 50 and 75 years to approach the canopy size and ecosystem services currently provided by mature oaks.

(Above excerpted from the site where you can read more-- <https://www.releafville.org/press>).



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Summer Disease | Pest Update

by Ann Hazelrigg, Phd, UVM Extension

The early spring and summer rains have resulted in a lot of **anthracnose**, especially noticed in red maple although all maples are susceptible as are ash, oak and sycamore. The fungal pathogen causes dark lesions on the foliage, often following leaf veins. In severe cases, defoliation can occur, but the damage is usually early enough in the season so the tree can flush out new growth. I have seen some tender shoot dieback as a result of the disease this year in red maples. No controls are warranted. <https://www.umass.edu/agriculture-food-environment/landscape/fact-sheets/maple-anthracnose>.

Oak leaf blister has been identified in oaks (*Taphrina caerulescens*). This fungus disease causes raised 'blister-like' lesions on the upper side of the foliage. During cool wet springs, almost all species of oak are subject to leaf blister disease, but members of the red oak family are particularly susceptible. The disease is closely related to *Taphrina deformans* which causes **peach leaf curl**. (The disease on peach causes



Above: (L) Maple anthracnose Photo: Ann Hazelrigg, UVM; (R) Oak leaf blister lesions. Photo: Ann Hazelrigg, UVM

Below: (L) Lily leaf beetle adults and damage (R) Slug-like larvae feeding on a leaf. Photo: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, bugwood.org. (R)



bubbly pink gall-like distortions on the foliage.) If severe, some defoliation may occur, but it is usually minimal and does not impact the health of the tree. The spores produced on the blisters will overwinter in bud scales ready to infect next spring if conditions are cool and wet shortly after bud break. As the leaves mature, they become more resistant to infection.

The **red lily leaf beetle** (*Lilioceris lili*) has been causing significant feeding damage on my true lilies (*Lilium* spp.). The pest does not attack daylilies (*Heemerocallis* spp.), canna lilies (*Canna* spp.) or calla lilies (*Calla palustris*). The bright red beetles were introduced during WWII and

showed up in New England in the 1990s. The adults are bright red and approximately 1/4 inch long, with black legs, head, antennae, and undersides. They fall to the ground when disturbed. The larvae are more damaging than adults and can grow to almost 1/2 inch long. The larvae camouflage



themselves with their own excrement and can look like slimy greenish-brown slugs. Both adults and larvae chew irregular holes in lily leaves, stems, and developing buds. The pest can completely defoliate plants and destroy flowers. Lily leaf beetles overwinter as adults and can fly long distances to find suitable plants. Females lay 250-400 eggs and larvae hatch within a week or so. The larvae feed for 2-3 weeks then drops to the ground to pupate. Once they develop into adults, they will feed the rest of the summer and fall. <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/lily-leaf-beetle/>

Honeylocust plant bugs (*Blepharidopterus chlorionis*) have been causing leaf and shoot distortion of the newest growth on common honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*). <https://extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden-insects/honeylocust-plant-bugs>

The adults are ~ 3/16 inch, pale green and are highly mobile while the smaller nymphs are wingless and have an orange spot on their backs. Both feed on the sap of honeylocust leaves and buds with piercing sucking mouthparts resulting in white stippling on the surface of the leaves and leaf curl. There is only one generation per year and most of the damage occurs in May and June. The damage is mainly aesthetic and causes no long-term harm to the tree.

Rose chafers (*Macrodactylus subspinosus*) are skeletonizing foliage on a variety of flowers, fruit plants, and trees and shrubs. These beetles typically show up earlier than Japanese beetles but can do the same type of damage. Adults are almost 1/2 inch long, green to tan in color with orange/brown spiny legs. The brown-headed larvae (also called grubs) are C shaped and feed on roots of grasses and other plants underground. Adult beetles emerge in May and June and feed for about 3-4 weeks or until about the end of June. They drop to the ground, lay eggs and the eggs hatch and feed spending the winter as



Above: Honeylocust plant bug Photo: Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, bugwood.org



larvae. In the spring the larvae pupate and turn into adults. There is one generation/year.

Four-lined plant bug injury is showing up on a variety of plants. This small true bug has piercing sucking mouthparts and feeds on over 250 herbs, shrubs and flowers. They overwinter as eggs on shoots and plant debris. They hatch in the spring and the nymphs feed and start causing damage by late May. Adult four-lined plant bugs are almost a quarter of an inch long and are yellow/green with 4 longitudinal stripes on their backs. The nymphs are smaller with black and yellow striped wing pads. The insects are hard to find and don't stay on plants for any length of time. Their feeding damage looks like angular dark leafspots that sometimes coalesce. The damage is unsightly but stops by the end of June. Most plants will outgrow the damage, so treatments are usually unnecessary, but important herbs could be protected with row covers in May and June.

As always, if you see a problem, take a picture and send to ann.hazelrigg@uvm.edu or you can send a sample to the UVM Plant Diagnostic Clinic, 63 Carrigan Drive, Burlington, VT 05405.

Top Left: Adult rose chafer.

Photo: University of Minnesota <https://extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden-insects/rose-chafers>.

Top Right: Adult four-lined plant bug.

Bottom Right: Angular leafspot-like feeding damage. Photo: Sabrina Tirpak, Rutgers PDL.





News from the VT Agency of Agriculture, Foods & Markets: A Closer Look at Vermont's New Plant Rule

By: Emilie Inoue, Plant Health Section

The **Regulated Introduced Plant Species (RIPS) Rule** went into effect **June 16, 2026**. It replaces a rule (formerly known as the Noxious Weed Quarantine) that had been in place since 2012, and while no rule is perfect, this one reflects a more current and considered understanding of how to approach regulating introduced plant species in Vermont. The two parts of the rule that matter most to understand are the Quarantine List and the Watch List - they are not the same thing.

Quarantine List

The **Quarantine List** is where the regulation lives. All species on it are actively regulated - if a species is on this list, it cannot be sold, distributed, or spread. The list is organized into three tiers, but every species is regulated regardless of which tier it falls under. The tiers reflect how widely a species is established across the state and help identify where prevention or full removal can make a meaningful difference at scale.

Tier 1 covers plant species not yet established in Vermont - species identified as harmful to Vermont's ecology, natural resources or agricultural systems. The focus is on prevention: making sure these species are not introduced in the first place.

Tier 2 covers species that have been introduced but are present only in isolated locations or limited areas of the state. There's still a real opportunity to limit further spread -



Tier 1: Kudzu (*Pueraria montana*)



Tier 2: Wineberry (*Rubus phoenicolasius*)



Tier 3: Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*)

these are the species where focused efforts toward full removal can make a meaningful statewide difference. Landowners are not required by the state to remove regulated plant species from their property - but prompt action where these species appear makes a real difference.

Tier 3 covers species already broadly established across Vermont. Rather than pursuing full statewide removal, the work shifts to a place-based approach: identifying areas of particular ecological, agricultural, or cultural value and concentrating efforts there. It's a difference in strategy, not in care or commitment.

Watch List

The **Watch List** is separate from the Quarantine List and serves a different purpose. It carries no regulatory weight - nothing on the Watch List is restricted or prohibited. A species on the Watch List is not a regulated species.

The Watch List makes information publicly available - specifically, what scientists, land managers, and others working closely with Vermont's and regional landscapes are already paying attention to. Species appear on it because they're being monitored here in Vermont, or because they're already regulated in neighboring states, giving grounded reasoning to keep an eye on them here as well. The Watch List serves as a way to ensure that this knowledge - observations, emerging concerns, and early signals from the field - is a shared



resource, available to everyone, not just those closest to where this information is gathered and discussed.

Species on the Watch List may, at some point, be considered for regulation -the rule outlines the pathway to becoming a regulated plant species and requires a detailed pest risk assessment and review by the Regulated Introduced Plant Species Advisory Group, with public notice as part of that process.

The Watch List is also a living list - species can be removed as well as added, when information reviewed and accepted by the advisory group supports that a species does not pose a concern. It is a transparency tool, not a warning, and built on the belief that having more information, offered early, leads to better-informed choices.

Acceptable Management Practices

Acceptable Management Practices, or AMPs, are another tool built into the rule. For species on the Quarantine List, AMPs provide specific, approaches that allow certain activities to continue in ways that minimize the risk of further spread.

Native Plant Resources

For anyone interested in exploring regionally native plant alternatives - whether for your own knowledge, for customer conversations, or for sourcing there are some publicly available resources that may be useful guides. They're offered here as a resource. [Native Perennials and Shrubs for Vermont Gardens](#) (pdf).

For planting projects near natural forests, research, or erosion control, follow the comprehensive [Planting Guidelines for ANR Lands](#). (pdf).

Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program's [Vermont Tree Selection Tool](#) can be used to find the right tree for managed landscapes. Also, Guiding Principles for Tree Planting in Vermont's urban and managed spaces [Vermont Tree Selection Guide](#) (pdf).

Questions about the RIPS Rule are welcome. Please reach out to the Plant Health Section at:

AGR.PlantHealth@vermont.gov .

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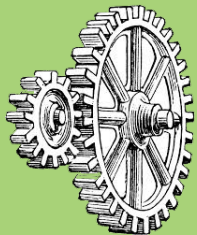
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You can learn more about Trees ROI **[HERE](#)**.





THE PLANT LOUNGE

wiry stems, hairy leaves and bodacious blooms. . .

Catalpa x erubescens 'Purpurea' - Purple Catalpa

by Mark Dwyer, Landscape Prescriptions by MD

I've always enjoyed catalpas (*Catalpa* sp.) in the landscape. In Janesville, Wisconsin, where I live, there are some old, venerable specimens in yards and parkways. Their bold foliage, beautiful flowers, cigar-shaped seed pods and broad adaptability in the landscape are all appealing. I also have become a fan of the harder-to-find purple catalpa (*Catalpa x erubescens* 'Purpurea'). This unique catalpa is an excellent specimen tree with many attributes of interest.

This purple selection is thought to originate from France in the late 19th century. This fast-growing, hybrid catalpa is a cross between the native southern catalpa (*Catalpa bignonioides*) and the Chinese catalpa (*Catalpa ovata*). With a lush, tropical appearance, the new growth of large, broad, heart-shaped leaves flushes out a very deep purple with older leaves fading to a bronze green and ultimately green. While the purple intensity is the most dramatic in spring, evidence of the darker foliage persists throughout the season until some shades of golden yellow fall color appear.

The flowers of this hybrid are consistent with other catalpas in appearing in late spring to early summer on panicles showcasing white, "foxglove-like" blooms featuring maroon speckles and orange-yellow accents. Flowering even at a young age, the exquisite blooms quite fragrant and also attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Later, long (14"-20") and narrow pods (capsules) are formed and dangle from the tree into the winter months. These bean-like pods support the historic



common names of "cigar tree" and "Indian bean tree".

Hardy in USDA zones 5-9, purple catalpa is thought to achieve a height and width of 40' or more. This tree is fine in full sun or part shade. Admittedly, I've not seen specimens over 25' tall in the Midwest, but imagine they will continue to gain size. Specimens can be kept shorter with coppicing or even cut low to the ground for a shrub-like habit. Moist, fertile and well-drained soils are ideal although catalpas are also remarkably urban tolerant (including heavy salt tolerance). Purple catalpa also has very few insect and disease problems and is notably resistant to honey fungus (*Armillaria*). This selection is best propagated by softwood or semi-hardwood cuttings.

The bold, textural contribution of this tree, combined with the deep purple new growth, makes purple catalpa an ideal specimen tree and conversation piece in the landscape. The flowers are spectacular and the options for successful use of this uncommon tree seem limitless.

Why Grow *Catalpa x erubescens* 'Purpurea'?

- Glossy purple spring growth
- Bold texture with subtropical-like foliage
- Fragrant flowers – butterflies and bees!
- Urban Tolerant



Specifics

Name: *Catalpa x erubescens* 'Purpurea'

Common Name: purple catalpa

Description: This medium-sized, rounded tree features very bold, glossy purple spring foliage that transitions to green. Showy white flowers in late spring to early summer feature maroon speckling and orange-yellow accents.

Hardiness: USDA Hardiness z 5-9

In the Landscape

Purple catalpa is best used as a specimen tree where the bold texture and rich coloration can be maximized effectively.

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

This article is reprinted with permission from Nursery Management Magazine.



About the Author:

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Visit: www.landscapeprescriptionsmd.com.

A wide-angle photograph of a large field of Echinacea flowers. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, showing a variety of colors including bright pink, orange, and yellow. The green foliage of the plants is dense and healthy. The overall scene is vibrant and colorful.

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