



GARDENCOMM

Garden Communicators International



National Federation of Press Women
2020 2nd Place National Award for
On the QT

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Visit MyGardenComm under Member Resources, or [click here](#). A login screen will appear. Click "Forgot your password?" Enter your email address. A message will be sent with a secure link to set or reset your password. Click the link and choose a new password. Once complete, you may login using your email as username and your new password. For issues, please call 212-297-2198.

Save
THE DATE!
AUGUST 30 TO
SEPTEMBER 2, 2021



On the After Tour September 3, you'll head to Richmond, Virginia, where you will hear about gardens of the past, see the present and visualize the future. A highlight will be the gardens at Maymont, the most visited gardens in the metro-Richmond area, delighting guests for more than 100 years.

In 1886, James and Sallie Dooley acquired farmland on the banks of the James River in Richmond, where Maymont stands today. Throughout the next three decades, Sallie Dooley, an avid student of horticulture, along with with an estate manager and 20 groundskeepers, directed the planting and maintenance of her gardens.

The magnificent gardens and landscapes are still very much as the Dooleys left them. Maymont's spectacular Italian Garden, Japanese Garden and Arboretum all date to the Dooleys' era and continue to wow any garden tour.

GARDENS

The Italian Garden (pictured) showcases distinct elements of Italian style such as geometrically patterned beds or parterres. Traditionally, Italian gardens had few flowers and the plants were primarily evergreens for texture and shape, often in manicured topiary.

The shaped beds of Maymont's main level, however, reflect the Victorian taste for flowers, now the modern preference as well. Maymont's naturalistic Japanese Garden contrasts strongly with the formality of the Italian Garden. Descending into the Japanese Garden and entering through its distinct gates is like stepping onto a different continent. The space is cool, shaded and intimate. Sounds are muted and the space is unmistakably reflective.

– Continues on page 3



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Past President **Becky Heath** • Brent & Becky's

Executive Director **Marla Schrager** • Kellen

DIRECTORS

N = National Director • R = Regional Director • Date = Term Expires

REGION 1

Sally Cunningham (2022 N)

Writer, Tour Director, Educator

Charlie Nardozi (2021 R)

Gardening with Charlie Nardozi

Cris Blackstone (2022 R)

REGION 2

Kathy Jentz (2021 N)

Washington Gardener

Teresa Speight (2021 R)

Cottage in the Court

Kim Roman (2022 R)

Square Foot Gardening 4U

REGION 3

Diane Blazek (2022 N)

All-America Selections/

National Garden Bureau

Alicia Rittenhouse (2021 R)

HyR BRIX Fertilizer

Pam Bennet (2022 R)

Ohio State University Extension

REGION 4

Kate Copsey (2021 N)

Freelancer

Helen Newling Lawson (2021 R)

Spot On Communications

Peggy Riccio (2022 R)

pegplant.com

REGION 5

Bill Johnson (2022 N)

Bill Johnson Nature Stock

Photography Inc.

Shelley Cramm (2021 R-South)

Garden in Delight

Chris Link (2022 R-North)

Plant Addicts Inc.

Randy Schultz (2022 R-South)

Schultz Communications

REGION 6

Erica Grivas (2023 N)

Chris Sabbarese (2021 R-South)

Corona

Grace Hensley (2022 R-North)

Fashion Plants

Noelle Johnson (2022 R-South)

AZ Plant Lady, LLC

REGION 7

Ken Brown (2021 N)

gardening-enjoyed.com

Niki Jabbour (2021 R)

The Weekend Gardener on News

Talk Radio 95.7

Andrea Whitely (2022 R)

Andrea Whitely Garden Consultant

Despite Pandemic, Newbie Gardener is Grateful



As 2020 comes to a close, we ponder the year's challenges none of us could have imagined—a global pandemic that we are still facing, inequality and natural disasters from coast to coast. There is a silver lining. Gardening has seen exponential growth from returning and new gardeners giving GardenComm members more job opportunities in the future.

I'm thrilled to share that I am one of the newbies. I recently moved from a high-rise in Chicago that had a small community herb garden to a home in southeast Wisconsin (a quick 90-minute drive). Our new property is managed by an association, but the previous owner negotiated to have a portion of the backyard for a personal garden. This was one of the selling points that excited me most particularly, especially after learning so much this past year as Executive Director of GardenComm.

NGA SURVEY

In a recent survey by Garden Research, a division of the National Gardening Association, Gardener's Supply President Jim Feinson noted this trend but said there's a need to keep the newbies engaged.

"But this growth is unevenly distributed and somewhat artificial," he said. "As the research shows, we risk returning to pre-pandemic patterns of slow or no growth in gardening. Only by using current events as a catalyst to change, challenging old ways of doing business, focusing on new customers, experimenting with our business models and driving and sharing innovation in our industry will we retain these returning and new gardeners and improve our industry prospects next year and in the future. In every aspect of our business, only we can create a new normal."

Region 1 Regional Director **Charlie Nardozi**, who works with Feinson, said the research indicates "online sales have finally broken through and we should see a big uptick in the numbers. We're seeing more traditional retail garden stores realize that online selling is possible for them. I noticed, anecdotally here in Vermont, that those nurseries that embraced online sales quickly did well this year."

EDUCATION PROGRAMS INCREASED

So, how has this affected GardenComm? Led by GardenComm President, **Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp**, the Board and committees have been working tirelessly to continue the mission of GardenComm, which is to provide opportunities for education, recognition, career development and a forum for wide-ranging interactions and collaborations for professionals in the field of garden communication.

When the in-person conference was at risk of being cancelled or postponed, the Education Committee, led by **Maria Zampini** and **Kim Toscano**, along with staff and Local Arrangements Chair, **Becky Heath**, spent countless hours exploring ways to fulfill the mission—a hybrid and eventually an all-virtual conference was successfully executed in August.

The Education Committee also refocused efforts on planning for bi-monthly webinars to support members on relevant topics, including but not limited to: "Monetizing Your Garden Knowledge by Offering a Membership Program" with **Noelle Johnson**, "Speaking Virtually to Clients and Customers" with **C.L. Fornari**, "Schedule C—Tax Savings for Freelancers" with **Ellen Zachos** and "Keeping New Gardeners Involved in Gardening" with **Diane Blazek** of the National Garden Bureau, **Mike Lizotte** from American Meadows, **Ryan McEnaney** from Bailey Nurseries and **Chris Sabbarese** of Corona Tools. There are many more webinars planned all the way through the spring and beyond. [Check online](#) often to see them.

When civil unrest spread as a result of the murder of George Floyd, the leadership tapped members of diverse backgrounds to help develop a statement committing to doing our part in listening, learning and acting as we move forward. Diverse perspectives can only lead to the best outcomes and GardenComm is continuing to look at ways to keep this on the top of our minds. An extensive in-depth look at the industry as it relates to diversity is currently being planned as a webinar to help us learn more.

— Continues on page 4

ARBORETUM

Maymont's 100-acre Arboretum is populated with thousands of stunning trees and shrubs, which include more than 200 exotic species imported by the Dooleys in the early 20th century, when Mr. Dooley began a planting program of considerable magnitude. Today, Maymont's Arboretum is home to several national and state champions including the blue Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica glauca*), Japanese cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*), European vine leaf linden (*Tilia x europaea*) and Persian ironwood (*Parrotia persica*). The grounds and gardens are like nothing else in the City of Richmond—expansive, unique, well maintained and ever changing. One must visit Maymont to fully understand why the grandeur of the Dooleys' gift to Richmond grows with each passing year.

TOUR INCLUDES LUNCH

Your tour day in Richmond features Gardens: Past, Present and Future. Explore a variety of Richmond gardens, focusing on historic, environmental and volunteer initiatives. Walk the English Garden of Agecroft Hall, a 15th century Tudor manor moved from England in the 1920s and reassembled on a bluff overlooking the James River.

Your visit at Maymont includes its various gardens, followed by lunch. The afternoon includes a public school with water harvesting sculpture and labyrinth, a restored African-American cemetery, and the Low Line—a walking trail beneath elevated train tracks along the river. You'll also learn about Richmond's new designation as a Biophilic City. Add this Richmond Tour to your itinerary, full of photo opportunities and ideas to share with your audience. 🌿

Peggy Singlemann, Director of Park Operations and Horticulture at Maymont, Peyton Nichols, Marketing Manager, Maymont Foundation, Leah Duncan and **Becky Heath** contributed to this article.



GardenComm's Blog

Want to learn more about GardenComm or do you have an interesting, timely topic to share with other members of GardenComm? Check out the [GardenComm blog](#) for weekly features by members. If you have an idea for a blog post, or would like more information, please email Cris at crisablackstone@gmail.com.



Save

THE DATE! DECEMBER 3 TO 6

GardenComm will produce a unique and fun at-home entertainment option for members and guests!

Sit back and enjoy a horticulture-themed comedy with a musical guest, which is performed and recorded exclusively for GardenComm.

Streams right from your computer or smart TV—you choose the time and your favorite place to watch. Please join us for this delightful fundraiser. All proceeds go directly to GardenComm.

PLEASE SEE PAGE 18

—Executive Director's Message, continued from page 2

GARDENCOMM VOLUNTEERS

With the unfortunate realities of members losing significant revenue in 2020, the Board has enlisted the help of a Membership Task Force led by **Diane Blazek** and **Ellen Zachos** to conduct member surveys (thanks to those who participated), and explore new and refreshed ways GardenComm can offer support to members.

Results of those findings and impact on membership will be revealed soon. The above efforts show just some of the benefits of membership and why it is so important to belong to the GardenComm community. Membership renewals will be coming soon. Now more than ever is a time for community, support and belonging, so I urge you to invest less than 40 cents a day to renew your 2021 membership, or join if you are not yet a member. [Check out the benefits of membership.](#)

In the meantime, as we close one of the most difficult years of our lives, I offer my sincere gratitude for allowing me to learn so much from all of you. I thank Jo Ellen, Maria, the ExComm and Board as well as the Kellen team—Leslie, James and Monica—for your perseverance and dedication to making GardenComm the best it can be keeping an open mind as we move forward together.

Be well and stay healthy.

All the best,



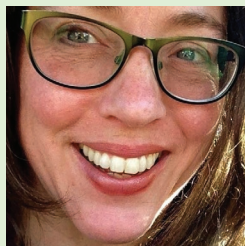
Marla "hoping to be a green thumb soon" Schrager

mschrager@kellencompany.com

CORRECTION

Members Elect New Directors

NEW NATIONAL DIRECTOR



Erica Grivas (6)

NEW REGIONAL DIRECTORS



Cris Blackstone (1)



Kim Roman (2)



Pam Bennett (3)

At least 207 members voted in the recent election for new Regional and National Directors for the GardenComm Board. Regional Directors serve two-year terms and National Directors serve three-year terms.

Thanks to **Becky Heath** and National Directors for recruiting these candidates. Responsibilities of these positions can be found on the [GardenComm website](#) under archives.

GARDENCOMM THANKS THE VOLUNTEERS ROLLING OFF THE BOARD. THEY ARE:

National Director Mary-Kate Mackey (6)

Regional Directors Ellen Ecker Ogden (1);

Louise Clarke (2); Beth Botts (3); Marie Mims Butler (4);

Rita Perea (5-North) and Dee Nash (5-South);

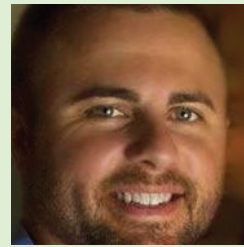
Anne Reeves (6-North); Jacqueline Soule (6-South)



Peggy Riccio (4)



Randy Schultz (5-South)



Chris Link (5-North)



Grace Hensley (6-North)



Noelle Johnson (6-South)



Niki Jabbour (7)*

* Niki was appointed to serve out the remaining year of Rob Howard's term. Rob resigned from the Board.

Looking Ahead from the Virtual Conference



I'm excited to announce GardenComm will produce a unique and fun at-home entertainment option for members and guests.

Sit back and enjoy a horticulture-themed comedy with a musical guest, which is performed and recorded exclusively for GardenComm. Streams right from your computer or smart TV—you choose the time and your favorite place to watch.

Please join us for this delightful fundraiser. All proceeds go directly to GardenComm. Please see page 18.

A YEAR OF CHALLENGES

Many of us have reinvented ourselves one more time as we've adapted to communicating virtually. We've dealt with dozens (hundreds?) of questions from garden newbies. We've tried to call attention to misinformation on social media...can you say Epsom salts, Dawn detergent and vinegar? We've learned new skills, reworked our web sites or blogs, taken classes or workshops to increase our knowledge or picked up a new hobby (sourdough bread anyone?).

CASH FLOW

We hope you've noticed (and signed up for) the webinars the Education Committee has developed for members. They have a decidedly business and communication focus—scientific communication and improving search results.

The committee has [webinars](#) mapped out into March. Members and nonmembers are welcome. We ask that members share the word about these webinars on their social media platforms and invite colleagues to join them. Remember that if you can't attend the webinar when presented, you can register and watch the program online for several weeks.

Right now, the webinars are critical to our organization's cash flow, so registrations are key—as are sponsorships. The Kellen team and the Sponsorship Committee have put together a [sponsorship package](#) for our webinars. Please consider sharing with potential supporters.

A GARDENER'S OPTIMISM

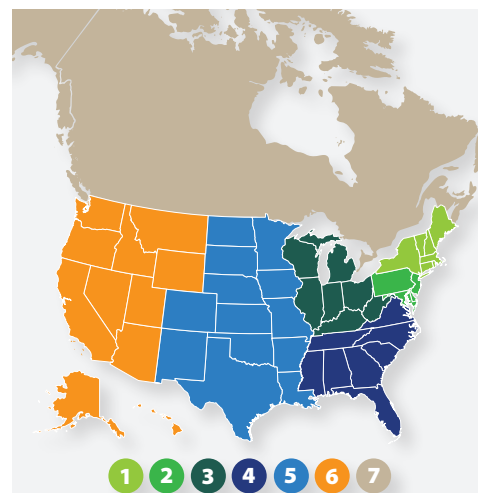
All of us have gone through a year of reactions to things we have never seen, heard or done before—much of it unpleasant, scary or downright deadly. We don't just go grocery shopping, we gear up to go. Same with the dentist, eye doctor and hairdresser. This is now normal.

GardenComm, for the first time, had to face a pandemic, which resulted in the cancellation of our in-person Conference and Expo for 2020. We appreciate all those who attended the virtual conference and the sponsors. We are planning for 2021 in Colonial Williamsburg, August 30 to September 2.

But gardeners being gardeners, we always are hopeful and optimistic. How many of us have said "It will be better next year," whether we're talking tomatoes, peppers, roses or weather.

2021 will be better. Stay safe. And, thank you for being a member. 🌱

Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp
jemsharp46@gmail.com



REGIONAL EVENTS

Region 2 will host the last two virtual Connect Meetings of 2020, 5 p.m. (EDT), Sundays, November 1 and December 6. The meetings are held via Zoom and are open to interested nonmembers and members in any region. [Email Kathy Jentz](#), Region 2 National Director, for meeting links and details.

MEMBER NEWS

Louise Clarke and **Eva Monheim** (Region 2) and their company VEE - Verdant Earth Educators are holding the second annual [ONE \(Our Natural Environment\) Symposium](#), November 5 on Zoom. There's full-day lineup of speakers. The event is geared to organizations and people who maintain our public and private landscapes. Speakers encourage land managers to use best practice techniques for land management.

Submitted by: **Kathy Jentz**

REGIONAL MEETINGS

November 12, 2020

5pm - 6pm PST

Region 6 Connect Meeting: Representing Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington & Wyoming. Contact **Grace Hensley**: grace@fashionplants.com

November 19, 2020

6:00 p.m.

Region 4 Connect Meeting: Representing Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee & Virginia. Contact **Kate Copsey**: katecopsey@aol.com

Garden Tutor: Angus Junkin



In 2008, Angus Junkin got the direction he needed to fully jump in to GardenComm. He was not aware of the organization until a chance meeting and lively discussion with Ed Hutchison,

aka Prof. Hutch, who was a journalism professor at Central Michigan University. Sharing his *Garden Tutor* book and kit project with the professor, he remembers hearing, "Look, you have written a book, and it's a book about gardening and Garden Writers [Association] is an organization built upon people just like you."

A few years went by while *Garden Tutor* became Angus' focus—perfecting the items to source in the kit, marketing and finding the niche for publicity and developing the Garden Tutor video and written modules—GWA was stored in his memory.

FIRST CONFERENCE & EXPO

Fast-forward to 2018 and the Chicago GardenComm Conference and Expo. During the Newcomers' Get Together, President **Becky Heath** welcomed Angus and listened as he described his *Garden Tutor* book, kit and overall concept. He recalls she smiled, nodded and suggested he consider becoming a vendor at the 2019 Salt Lake City Conference and Expo.

"Angus could clearly articulate his goals for his book and gardening kit," Becky said. "I was completely blown away by how his experiences and approach to his product came together and how he realized there was a need for new gardeners to find everything they'd need to start, successfully, in one place."

Becky encouraged and congratulated him, and now Angus sums up his GardenComm membership and experience as a vendor saying, "I am grateful to GardenComm for the connections and feedback I have from members as they welcomed me and offered tips for getting the most out of the organization."

Junkin promises to be a part of the Williamsburg Conference—no matter what form it takes—and hopes he can share the



Angus Junkin's *Garden Tutor* teaches all about gardening with online programs.

welcoming attitude with the newbies he'll meet as he continues working with GardenComm in different ways.

FAMILY GARDEN, VOLUNTEERING AND EDUCATION

From working in his family garden, learning from his mother and volunteering in his hometown community garden to interning at Bill McElwain's innovative project, the Green Power Farm, in Weston, Massachusetts, as a teenager, Angus was growing fond of gardening and of the landscaper's lifestyle. He attended Syracuse University for two years,

studying political science, while dabbling in landscape architecture studies at the nearby SUNY campus. But it was a particular course on famous landscape architects that continually gnawed at him.

His transfer to Harvard College, finishing with a Bachelor of Arts in Government, was the earliest start of his *Garden Tutor* project. From owning a landscape company throughout college to a 16-year long career in a company doing site remediation work, Angus grew to realize his real strength was in identifying how valuable process is to the

—Continues on page 7

success of any undertaking, and how his first love—gardening—could benefit from having what he calls “an operating system to help frame the ways gardeners could begin their projects, and have the tools and information needed to make good decisions.”

GARDEN TUTOR

Angus is an easy-going, articulate and casual conversationalist, who can make that operating system idea clear as day. He explained how the *Garden Tutor* book and kit outline his “site, style, and selection” philosophy. “Understanding how to build the best site for the strongest start to any garden project is essential, and then applying your own sense of style. Developing that that style through the plants you select is the recipe for success,” he said.

Angus is adamant about what is in the Garden Tutor’s toolkit. He chose the soil test strips for the kit because they are specifically calibrated to be used for soil measurements. He calls himself a tool collector. He says that the tool he can’t live without, “It’s my garden

spade! That may seem counterintuitive; most people would think of a shovel, but the spade helps you work more efficiently. Think like a contractor. With a good flat-bottomed spade, you can edge, divide, transplant... it’s all there for you in a good spade.”

FREE ONLINE PROGRAMS

Checking out the Garden Tutor’s tutorials, it’s clear that another strength of this entrepreneur is his ability to make complex garden concepts easy to understand and to integrate in the user’s own gardening practices. His ability to identify what a new gardener needs to know about soils and amendments is a talent and a skill. His broad background and horticulture knowledge gained formally and informally from experts, (“Thanks, Mom,” he said fondly) forms the tutorials.

A natural and intuitive teacher, the [Garden Tutor site](#), offers the video lessons free, making it a different type of business model. But the Direct Gardening Association recognized him with its 2020 Green Thumb Award. DGA states, “The Garden Tutor is a unique

multimedia course that teaches beginning gardeners how to grow a garden like a professional, instead of learning by trial and error. Here is the foundation for a beginning gardener to start a lifelong hobby of successfully growing plants of all kinds.”

That’s a terrific tribute to Angus with his clearly developed “Site, Style and Selection” process. He is interested in product development as well as in working in niche markets to promote the best in gardening information, tools and supplies. Keep your eyes open for more from Angus as he becomes involved with additional products to put in his toolkit and to help everyone who loves gardening even more. 🌿

Cris Blackstone is a Regional Director in Region 1, a member of the Marketing and Communications Committee and coordinator of [GardenCommGrows](#), the GardenComm blog. In her spare time, she is the Education Coordinator for the New Hampshire Landscape Association and co-host of “The Environmental Hour” on Portsmouth, New Hampshire’s WSCA 106.1 FM Radio.



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Food for Thought



A pandemic, fires, erratic weather and gaps in the food supply chain have all magnified social problems that became front-page news in 2020. Now, more than ever, the paradigm of food security

is on shaky ground. But there are glimmers of hope. Here are some gardeners who have stepped up to provide regenerative solutions for their communities and beyond.

SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE, OUT OF THE PAST

For Owen Taylor, the act of saving Italian and Irish seeds is a way to salvage the identity, stories and traditions of his ancestors that have been lost through assimilation into American culture. His company, Truelove Seeds, named for his grandmother Letitia Truelove, offers rare, open pollinated, culturally important vegetable, herb and flower seeds grown by small-scale farmers committed to community food sovereignty, cultural preservation and sustainable agriculture.

Taylor was an advocate for community gardening and spent 15 years in the food justice movement. These experiences form the foundation of his current work, saving seeds and training community leaders how to effectively share their knowledge and skills.

Taylor often works with immigrants and refugees who never lost the link to their heritage cultures. He wants to keep that connection alive so the food they grow from Truelove Seeds “tastes like home to them, like freedom, like their grandmother’s house.”

INDIGENOUS SEED KEEPER

Rowen White, Mohawk Nation Seed Keeper and farmer, is a passionate activist for indigenous seed and food sovereignty. She is the founder of Sierra Seeds and teaches programs focusing on a holistic, permaculture-based approach to seed stewardship.

White believes that a deep sense of connection to our food extends beyond the garden. It also embraces the kitchen, dining table and how we engage in the local food movement and beyond.

She reminds us that most of what we eat eventually links back to the generosity of a



Ian, Julia and Tania coax seeds from Peperone Friariello (*Capsicum annuum*), a delicious frying pepper from near Naples, Italy. Truelove Seeds founder Owen Taylor grows this variety to connect to his southern Italian heritage.

seed. “Food has such a sensory impact on our everyday lives; on people, culture, story and the human experience,” White said.

EDIBLE INDIGENOUS LANDSCAPES

Cincinnati-based gardeners Solomon Gamboa and Austin Miller offer a unique solution for biodiversity loss and climate change in their book, *Native Plant Agriculture*. They suggest that shifting cropland from annual to perennial crops can reduce greenhouse gasses.

Using edible native plants and animals as the basis of a primarily perennial agricultural system could confront the challenge of biodiversity decline with an eco-inclusive

natural, healthy climate solution for people and wildlife.

Plums, elderberries and sunchokes are just a few of the native fruits and vegetable crops that are edible and beautiful, too. Passionflower, a vertical grower, provides spectacular, fragrant flowers and fruit with the added benefit of attracting native bees and butterflies. Cutleaf coneflower (*Rudbeckia laciniata*), also known as Sochan, is a staple vegetable of indigenous tribes throughout its native range. Its bright yellow flowers attract many bees, butterflies, beetles and moths. Goldfinches love their seeds.

— Continues on page 9

FEEDING COMMUNITY

Professional gardener Natalie Flores' broad experience spans from helping clients turn front lawns into vegetable plots to managing the student-learning garden at Santa Monica College in California. Frustrated at being unable to work during the pandemic, she started a program to help neighbors who had lost their jobs and couldn't feed their families.

Partnering with a friend whose restaurant closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak, Natalie sought help from local grocers and organizations like FoodCycle LA, which was already keeping surplus food out of landfills. Natalie's volunteer organization, Nourish LA, has fed thousands of families since the operation began this spring.

Through this project, exciting opportunities are opening to help create jobs, food security and better policy. "Food is something very simple that brings us all together," Flores said. "It feels good to feed people, prevent food from going to waste and do something for our community."

FOOD DESERT TO FOOD FOREST

In 2010, Ron Finley started planting vegetables in the parkway strip right outside his door and quietly started a revolution. He was determined to change his neighborhood of South Central Los Angeles from a food desert to a food forest, where kids have access to good nutrition and communities embrace health, well-being and self-reliance with fresh, organic food choices.

Finley received the GardenComm Honorary Member Award this year and continues to share his vision for thriving, prosperous communities in his neighborhood and around the world. In collaboration with greenamerica.org he promotes regenerative gardening through the *Climate Victory Gardens* program. He asks, "With all the abundance in this world and all the food that's thrown away every day, why should anyone be hungry?" 🌱

Marcia Tate is a garden designer, photographer, writer, speaker and teacher who focuses on growing beautiful gardens that preserve clean water, land and air, protect wildlife and enhance our way of living. She regularly leads restoration plantings, stream cleanups and educational events. You can [email her](mailto:marcia@marciatate.com) and find her on Instagram @gardeninfluence.



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- Special admission privileges/discounts at over 320 participating gardens nationwide via our AHS Reciprocal Admissions Program
- Discounted admission to AHS programming, including our annual Great American Gardeners Award and Book Award ceremony & banquet
- The reward of knowing you're supporting AHS's mission to promote the people-plant connection and environmental stewardship



Join now: www.ahsgardening.org/join

Michael Perry: Botanical Nomad



When Michael Perry, aka [Mr. Plant Geek](#), and I spoke this summer, he had just gone on his first trip outside the UK in 6 months. That is very unusual for this intrepid

plantsman whose calendar is usually jam-packed. When I compared him to the infamous 19th century plant explorers, he clarified that he was more of an “indoor plant explorer,” hunting for rare and unusual plants in the greenhouses of growers and nurserymen at flower shows all over Europe and Asia.

Michael describes himself as a “freelancer,” working in varying capacities as a QVC presenter, blogger, podcaster and a self-professed horticultural middleman between the gardening public and the trade.

It's hard to square Mr. Plant Geek, the persona he created as an adult professional, with what he describes as the painfully shy teenager who kept his passion for plants a secret from his peers.

WINNING HORT DESIGN LED TO CAREER

Plants were Michael's refuge after school and on the weekends, and he confides that he wasn't sure what else he could do. Fresh out of horticultural college, he won a garden design competition on a local BBC radio station that was sponsored by one of the finest seed houses in the world, Thompson & Morgan.

Michael wrote the company to inquire about a job and after nearly two decades at the company, he became its head of new product development—finding and marketing the newest and most unique plants. “I spent 18 years training up through the company, writing packet copy, putting catalogs together and ultimately hunting down new plants from growers and customers all over the world. I got pulled onto the media side—TV and video work—something my 18-year-old self would never have imagined.”

He laughed at the idea that he is a horticultural prodigy. He wasn't interested in attending university and his parents didn't force the issue but it's obvious his entrepreneurial talents emerged at a young age. “My grandparents were judging at garden shows



Michael Perry's joined GardenComm when working in the U.S. with the Home Shopping Network.

as well as ‘growing and showing’ dahlias and chrysanthemums. That's when I started (entering plants) in the children's class. They also grew plants to sell at local markets, and as a teenager I was allowed to become a member of The Women's Institute, allowing me to sell plants and the occasional batch of lavender biscuits, as well.”

Michael describes his work with plants as more a re-imagining than reinvention. He took a lot of inspiration from the breeders he worked with. “Charles Valin at Thompson & Morgan created a kind of Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory of plants, working with over 50 genera of plants at a time. They would try to breed fragrance into begonias or create a blue flowered geranium. Sometimes customers provided the plants that allowed the company, for example, to create better blooming foxgloves, and they [the customer] would then get a share of the royalties as well.”

SEARCHES FOR BRAND

After a trek to Costa Rica, Michael started a website to document the trip and that evolved into his PlanthunterUK website [no longer online] and included articles, merchandise and the like. Michael felt he

needed a brand to knit it all together and Mr. Plant Geek was born. He admits there was never a master plan for his career.

“Most of what I do is intuitive and natural. The persona gives me an identity and that's really important when you are booked for work. My given name does not tell people what I am about and what I can offer them in work and in followers,” he said. “Mr. Plant Geek comes across as a little bit cheeky but also professional and authoritative. I was in the Grubby Gardener's naked calendar and the Rude Botany series. I can't expect to come away too clean. At the end of the day, it's just coincidental that *Rubus cockburnianus* sounds weird, but it's not *actually* rude, it's botany. I always knew that it was good to be notorious for something and be a little bit brave with what you do. It just suits me, really.”

If there is any doubt remaining that plants are integral to his identity you just have to look at him; his arms and legs are covered in intricate and beautiful tattoos, part of an evolving landscape that includes peonies, lilies, auriculas and appropriately *Orchis italica*—the naked man orchid.

– Continues on page 11

HOLLAND GARDENS THE BEST

Michael bursts my bubble in other ways when it comes to the English and their gardens. "In the UK, you see very few nice gardens in the provinces. In fact, Holland is the place with the best home gardens. Every garden will be spic and span and looking good all year." There also seems to be a bit of a disconnect with what the gardening media in the UK are doing and the average gardener.

"A lot of garden broadcasters are stuffy and over serious about it and perhaps make it seem like you can't take part because you are not that good at it." He prefers being authentic and takes a give-it-a try approach. "I grow plants, but I've got stuff that dies, and I am also living my life."

Michael joined GardenComm when he was working on The Home Shopping Network in the U.S. and appreciates the networking and unique and thought-provoking ideas. He entered his program in the Garden Media Awards in that same spirit of risk taking that has worked for him throughout his career. "I am proud of what I have achieved, and I thought it was worth a shot!" That chance paid off and in 2019 he won a Gold Medal for Best Overall Individual Website.

VIRTUAL AND REAL LIFE MARRIAGE

He is optimistic about the future of the gardening community during and post COVID-19. "With more people working from home, potentially having more time and hopefully finding a passion for beautifying their outdoor spaces as much as their indoor spaces. Flower shows like Chelsea went virtual this year, making them a lot more accessible and attracting a lot more recruits from around

the world. It was a very different show with content that most people don't get to see—behind the scenes tours of nurseries, gardening advice from experts, as well as highlights from competitions. Perhaps a marriage of the virtual and real life is what the future holds."

He is clearly not afraid to explore unfamiliar territory, virtual or otherwise. He was once hired to do an entire jungle suite in a hotel room for the Dutch flower council. "I totally bit off more than I could chew, but, in the end, nobody could tell I had never done it before. You push yourself and that feeling of euphoria you get is addictive. Your first time has to be sometime you know?"

He admits he is not that much of a planner but for this botanical nomad, the plant world is just starting to get a taste of what he can do. He would love to see a magazine-type gardening show, or a Jamie Oliver-type "back to basics" program.

For now, his writing, podcasting @plant-basedpodcast and frequent media appearances on I-TV keep this "hortpreneur" energized and inspired to create accessible and informative content. His followers (more than 25,000 each on Twitter and Instagram) can find everything from a mini online gardening school (WTF Gardening) to plant quizzes. (I got a 7 out of 10 right on *Match the Rude Plant to its Name*.) His rude botany merch is also a hoot so you can wear your plant love on your sleeve, much like Michael does. 🌱

Carmen DeVito is a principal of Groundworks in Brooklyn, New York, and co-host of the GardenComm Media Award winning *We Dig Plants* on HeritageRadioNetwork.org.



RUTH CLAUSEN

Deer-Resistant Native Plants for the Northeast

Timber Press

208 pages, paperback, \$19.95

February 16, 2021



Deer are an ever-present problem in gardens across the Northeast. In *Deer-Resistant Native Plants for the Northeast*, **Ruth Rogers Clausen** and Gregory D. Tepper offer a

solution: Native plants that deer simply don't eat. It includes annuals, perennials, ferns, grasses, sedges and shrubs. Every plant profile includes a deer-resistance rating, hardiness zone information, height and spread as well as a description that highlights other species. Additional information includes suggested companion plants and details on the pollinators and beneficial wildlife that each species attracts.

This practical, authoritative guide is a must-have for home gardeners in Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, North Carolina, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, Vermont, West Virginia and Washington, D.C. 🌱

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What You Need to Know to Get Started in Influencer Marketing



According to the Nielsen report, 92% of consumers trust suggestions made by their friends and family more than advertising.

Eight-eight percent of consumers believe online

reviews written by people who have bought the product as much as they trust recommendations from people they know (Matt Warren, [Big Commerce](#)).

So, what's a business to do? Word of mouth has long been considered the most effective form of advertising. Today, that happens through online reviews, social media posts, blogs, or podcasts. Every business needs advertising and has a story to tell, but its customers are more apt to believe someone else who has had experience with the products or services than the brand themselves. Thus, the rise of influencer marketing—modern day word of mouth advertising—where GardenComm members can be of service.

NEW WAVE OF TALK

With the advent of social media, brands have lost the power to be the sole conveyor of messaging around their products. There is a whole new wave of people talking about products online every day, and their influence extends far beyond the typical reach of the brand.

There are established definitions for those who take on a more formal role as a word-of-mouth advertiser. These definitions are not unique to garden communicators. They are established across all industries, so it is important to use them accurately.

ADVOCATES

Many GardenComm members are likely brand advocates. This is a person who is very loyal to a particular product, brand or service because they use it themselves and are proud to share their experience voluntarily without compensation. For instance, you might write an online review or post a story about growing a particular new plant in a Facebook group. Brand advocates are highly trusted by their



Laura of @Garden Answer is our industry's top garden influencer with nearly 1 billion views across all social media platforms.

followers because they have actually used the plant, product or service and weren't paid to post a positive review.

AMBASSADORS

Being a brand ambassador goes a step further. This person is hired by a company to promote a particular product or to build brand awareness through social media, blogs,

presentations, podcasts or events over the long term—perhaps for many years. Essentially, they are paid to tell others why they love a certain company's products or services in the hopes of influencing others to try it. Brand ambassadors usually have a smaller established following, so the relationship with the brand is mutually beneficial for growing both audiences.

— Continues on page 13

INFLUENCERS

Influencers have their own, usually large, engaged audience that follows them because of their status. They can demand a higher pay from the companies that hire them because of their celebrity and extended reach through their own established channels. They are often hired for a short term to promote a new product launch, event or contest. A brand has the potential to reach many new followers it may never have reached without an influencer.

Over the last few years, there has been a general sway away from influencers with huge followings towards micro influencers (fewer than 100,000 followers) and nano influencers (fewer than 10,000 followers) who are thought to be more believable. These types of influencers have niche interests—houseplants for apartment dwellers, for instance—and their followers are “engaged almost to the brink of fanaticism,” according to Brenda Taulbee of Savy Digital Marketing. This is good news for GardenComm members, many of whom specialize in a particular niche of horticulture.

INFLUENCER DOS AND DON'TS

Think you want to be an influencer or brand ambassador? Consider these tips:

DOS

- Convey your upbeat, friendly, knowledgeable personality. If this doesn't describe you, consider being something other than a public-facing influencer.
- Establish an engaged following on your own social media channels.
- Focus on what's worked in your personal experience, but don't be afraid to share a few “fails” along the way to keep it real.
- Know a company's brand, products or services well before approaching them for a partnership so you can tailor your pitch appropriately.
- Only choose to work with companies whose values you share, products you love and stories you can feel good about telling.
- Be open about requesting compensation for your work at the start of the relationship, whether in the form of free sample products and/or direct payment.

DON'TS

- Don't approach a brand or business to be an influencer if you have not yet built a following.

- Don't approach a brand or business if your sphere of influence is not in the same general field as the brand. For instance, if you are an avid home gardener, that experience does not qualify you to approach a hiking company to be an influencer for their brand of outdoor survival gear even though both activities are conducted outdoors.
- Don't act like a salesperson. You are not there to make a direct sale for the people who hired you. Your role as an influencer is to use the credibility you have built with your audience and share your authentic experience with others in hopes of inspiring them to buy.
- Don't continue to work as an influencer or brand ambassador for a company if they insist on controlling what you say and how you say it. Maintaining your own integrity is of utmost importance if you ever want to work as an influencer again.

AN INFLUENCER SUCCESS STORY

When Aaron LeBoutillier received a new camera for Christmas in 2013, he and his wife Laura had no idea their lives would change forever. They began filming gardening videos for their new YouTube channel, Garden Answer, just for fun in Spring 2014. They decided to continue for one year and after that, if nothing had come of their efforts, they would stop.

Just a few months before the year was over, I came across one of Laura's videos and brought her to the attention of Proven Winners. What started as filming just a few videos for the Proven Winners Facebook page has since turned into a multi-year, lucrative contract as the brand's primary influencer. Additionally, they now have contracts with four more brands of gardening products.

Garden Answer's influence has reached astounding heights, with over 1 million YouTube subscribers, 3 million Facebook followers and a fan base of 370,000 on Instagram. Across all platforms, they have received nearly 1 billion views and their numbers continue to climb. 🌿

Susan Martin is a former Region 3 Regional Director and is a full-time freelance horticultural marketer, writer and speaker based in Michigan. In her work, she helps to match up her customers with key influencers and brand ambassadors.

Upcoming GardenComm EVENTS

Webinars

Thursday, November 5

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET

An Easy Approach to Sensible Social Media Presence: How to Keep Social Media Platforms from Taking Over Your Life and Business

with **Carol Michel** and **Dee Nash**

Tuesday, November 17

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET

Good Writing, Bad Writing, Better Science Writing

with **Sally Cunningham**

Tuesday, January 12

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET

There's a New Bud in Town: Autoflowering Cannabis, America's next Tomato

with **Jeff Lowenfels**

Thursday, January 27

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET

Talking to Strangers - How to Master the Interview

with **Mary-Kate Mackey**

Tuesday, February 2

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET

Using Horticultural Therapy Values to Produce Content Your Audience Will Love

with **Perla Curbelo**

Thursday, March 11

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM ET

Rising to the Top - Getting to the Top of Search Results

with **Stacey Hirvela**

[For details and to register](#)

Covid Gardeners in a Digital Classroom: Sean and Allison McManus



Sean and Allison McManus

have only one speed, and it's full speed ahead. I first met them in the lobby at their first GardenComm Annual Conference in Salt Lake City in 2019, rushing between

lectures and the tour bus. A casual seed planted with a tweet from member **C.L. Fornari** inviting them to join up had firmly taken root and their initial podcast has now grown to a popular YouTube Channel, a book deal, and even a new device to thwart squirrels.

When we first met, I was intrigued by their obvious passion for science-based gardening. They had just launched their podcast, *Spoken Garden*, but felt that they didn't really have time to develop it properly. Then, this fall, Allison, after a decade of teaching middle-school science in the Tacoma Public Schools, left her job and it wasn't long before Sean joined her so that they could focus full time on the project. "It was a huge leap for both of us," she said. "It just felt like the right time."

DIVERSE TEACHING STYLES HELP NEW GARDENERS GROW

Though they didn't know it, Sean and Allison's timing couldn't have been better. Now that there are so many new Covid Gardeners, people are hungry for consumable, and accurate, information. Sean and Allison have built a following with their podcast, providing bite-sized advice to new gardeners. You can't miss their infectious enthusiasm as they share their "DIY Garden Minute" tips and longer interviews to help beginning gardeners get up and grow.

They also started a new YouTube channel during their lockdown period, and have produced a daily quarantine video taking new gardeners along with them on their journey to improve their gardens. With Sean and Allison's deep understanding of multiple learning styles from her time in the classroom, they knew that adding a visual channel would reach and help more people. "It's been a gigantic learning curve," she said "But we're really enjoying what we're doing," added Sean. "We're either applying what we love to do,



Sean and Allison McManus use diverse teaching styles to help new gardens.

how we like to do it or we're still learning." With science-based teaching at the core of their business, their audience has found them.

GOING DIGITAL

Another completely obvious approach after teaching middle-schoolers was their decision to be fully digital. A thorough understanding about using all the social channels to reach people where they are, has led them to build up their blog, Pinterest and Instagram content in concert with the demands of podcasting and video blogging. It's a lot to manage, and a strict Google calendar helps them keep on track, alternating between research, producing, and editing all the content. Their biggest piece of advice to managing all of this? Start with one thing, keep at it on a consistent schedule, and then add another. Jump in, and

keep asking questions. Make connections, they said.

And so they did. That chance tweet from C.L. encouraged them to attend their first meeting. GardenComm member **Jessica Walliser**, with whom they had connected on Pinterest, followed up in person. She encouraged them to pitch an idea, which led to a book contract. Despite embracing the digital format, an in-print guide for first-time gardeners reaches this audience in a third way. Everyone they met on this journey has been enthusiastically supportive, something they hadn't experienced in their previous jobs.

– Continues on page 15

MOVING FORWARD

Intensely busy writing through the spring and early summer, they are now working on their marketing and monetization of their book, *The First-Time Gardener: Growing Plants and Flowers*. In February, they divided the workload with Sean, the horticulturist, providing the primary content, and Allison, as a beginning gardener herself, editing out any unclear jargon. Together they tested and filmed much of the content, ensuring their advice was easy to follow. Collaboration has been rewarding, though with too many ideas, they try to keep each other in check. Their only complaint? Running out of space in their garden for new projects.

Even after 160 consecutive days of quarantine gardening videos, there are always new ideas. One garden problem that has bedeviled Sean's mom was those pesky squirrels that kept digging up her bulbs. In their spare time, Sean and Allison devised a new two-part cage to protect the bulbs in her garden. Made of 100% recycled materials, they have devised a prototype bulb planter, and are now learning all about injection molding and how to scale this to launch a physical product in stores soon.

Throughout their garden communication journey, Sean and Allison have discovered that people today really do want to learn about gardening, but may have been afraid to start. Sean and Allison's grow-with-us approach is ideal for this new-to-gardening population.

As garden communicators, it's our responsibility to create the space to allow new gardeners to learn, be comfortable making mistakes, be open to new things and ask questions. Sean and Allison have jumped in to learn all the different tech channels while staying true to their message: Anyone can grow. We can learn alongside them through quick videos, a podcast in our pocket and now, curled up on the couch, with a new book.

Their garden and their future have never looked better. 🌱

Grace Hensley is the owner of Fashion Plants LLC, where she is a garden photographer, horticultural content writer, certified professional horticulturist, ornamental container designer, zombie vegetable gardener and a Region 6 Regional Director of GardenComm.



Boggan's First Article Published

John Boggan (Region 2) is pleased to announce that his first professionally published gardening article, "Confessions of a Zone Pusher" appeared in the July/August 2020 issue of *The American Gardener* magazine.

Cohen Thankful for GardenComm Honor

Stephanie Cohen (Region 2) would like to convey her thanks and pride in receiving the recent GardenComm Hall of Fame award and for being from Region 2.

Jentz Talks about Seed Starting

Kathy Jentz (Region 2) was interviewed about seed starting for the *Gardening Made Easy Show*, an online video series that will be available free to new gardeners starting in October. The mission is to create healthy food sources no matter where you live. The content is aimed at those looking for guidance and inspiration to change their food sources, communities and lives around the planet.

Monheim's New Podcast Encourages Planting Trees

Eva Monheim (Region 2) has a new [Plant a Trillion Trees podcast](#) that began airing in August and comes out weekly. Eva's idea for the podcast came from a challenge that Michael Dirr presented her before the Coronavirus pandemic began. Fellow GardenComm members **Louise Clarke** and **Kathy Jentz** have already appeared on the show with the hope of encouraging people to continue to plant trees because a million and a billion just won't do.

Sterman Starts Grab & Grow Gardens in California

Nan Sterman (Region 6) and Mim Michelove, CEO of [Healthy Day Partners](#) started Grab & Grow Gardens for those who are having trouble feeding themselves or their families because of the COVID-19 quarantine in the San Diego, California, area.

"We have a small army of volunteers that meet twice a week to plant, pot, package and pack gardens, which we then supply to hunger-relief agencies across our county. The agencies distribute the gardens alongside food and meals," Nan said. Area businesses have provided funding and merchants supply plants or seeds.

Nearly 4,000 starter gardens have been distributed to low-income families, military families and seniors in the region. "What started as just an idea with no budget and no plan—just the drive to help—has now become a huge success," she said. 🌱



Garden Media Group has unveiled its 20th *Garden Trends Report*, available free for [download now](#). The 2021 report, "The Great Reset," provides a detailed snapshot of how people are responding to the evolving dynamics within the garden industry as well as the expected trends over the

coming year. According to the report, consumers are in the middle of a great reset. And while no one knows how lives will look once the reboot is over, the 2021 Garden Trends Report analyzes how gardens can be tools for building more resilient and connected communities. [Garden Media](#) has published its highly anticipated [Garden Trends Report](#) annually since 2001. The firm offers information about trends in various formats, including a free annual report and a YouTube series. Read Garden Media's [GROW!](#) blog for trend updates and industry news. 🌱

Down the Rabbit Hole of Podcasting



In September 2019, during the Salt Lake City GardenComm Conference and Expo, several members interested in podcasting met in the hotel lobby one evening. As

I walked up the staircase to my room, I looked down and watched as they sat on the couches talking. Although I enjoy listening to podcasts during my commute, joining the group never entered my head.

But then **Teri Speight** called me in early January. Teri and I first met in 2017 as volunteers for the DC Garden Bloggers Fling. Full of energy and great ideas, Teri has a way of encouraging and motivating and before you know it, you are swept along the river. When she asked if I wanted to collaborate on a podcast, “yes” tumbled out of my mouth before the brain knew what happened.

FIRST PODCAST PRODUCED

A week later, we talked on the phone about the specifics given that we both have office jobs, and I live in Virginia (Region 4), and she lives in Maryland (Region 2). We decided on a biweekly, 30-minute format and we developed a script. We selected *Gardens ‘n Plants* to embrace people who like plants or are interested in gardens (noun), or interested in gardening (verb). We chose the common flowering dogwood to symbolize our region: the Washington, D.C., metro area. Because we already had our own websites, we did not establish a website devoted to *Gardens ‘n Plants*, instead we learned how to incorporate each episode on our respective sites.

I started to listen to podcasts about podcasts in my car to get up to speed and we recorded our first episode on January 19, 2020. We started with and still use the free [Anchor](#) app. Using my iPhone, I sent a link for Teri to call in and we talked on our phones, following the script. The app records this as one audio file, which I edited; I divided the track into three segments: Introductory statement with background music, main section and the closing segment with background music. It was possible, but onerous to eliminate pauses but it was almost impossible to eliminate accidental background noises or modify voices.



Peggy Riccio (left) and Teri Speight launched their *Gardens ‘n Plants* podcast after the GardenComm annual meeting in Salt Lake City.

POWER CIRCLE FORMED

In March, we were told to work from home due to COVID-19, which allowed us more time, so in April we created a Podcasting Power Circle with **Teresa Watkins, Mary Schier, Steven Biggs** and **Gerald Simcoe**. We began meeting every week via Zoom.

By this time, Teri and I had recorded many episodes and I was not satisfied with my voice—too soft and too quiet. I tried everything from talking in the closet full of clothes to standing up. Fortunately, during one of the first Power Circle meetings, Steven showed us how to edit audio files using [Audacity](#), which is a free, open source, cross-platform, audio software.

However, to use Audacity, we had to record with a computer, not the iPhone. I broke down and incurred my first podcasting expense: one [Audio-Technica](#) ATR2100x-USB microphone and a [TASCAM](#) TH-03 headphone for about \$130. We began to record on the free version

of [Zencastr](#) and then I uploaded the two tracks into Audacity. Audacity enabled me to edit tracks separately, eliminate unwanted noises, background noise, and pauses. After I edited the tracks, I uploaded them as one file into Anchor, where I split the file into three segments and wrote the show notes. We have since learned that Zoom can record two tracks so we now use Zoom because Zencastr turned out to be unreliable.

CONSISTENCY MATTERS

Through the Power Circle’s members and guests, I have learned so much about podcasting and growing *Gardens ‘n Plants*. In July, one of the guests said that podcasting should be viewed as an intimate relationship like dating, where we want the person to call us back, to remember us and to go out with us again.

Therefore, shows should be consistent—at least weekly on a specific day. At this time, Teri

– Continues on page 17

and I knew that we would not be going back to the office soon and we started to record weekly.

I began to promote the podcast using short video clips and learned about [Canva](#), [Headliner](#) and [Audiogram](#). I promoted the podcast on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and learned how powerful Pinterest can be for increasing listeners and how important hashtags and emojis are with Instagram. I also learned about creating merchandise (aka merch), including stickers and T-shirts with [Stickermule](#), [Teepublic](#) and [Redbubble](#). The importance of search engine optimization (SEO) became more important and I found out how critical it was to write show notes with keywords and using them in the title, instead of just an episode number.

I became much more aware of sponsors, which could be gardening-related or not gardening-related companies and even ways to earn money through membership-type models such as [Patreon](#). I realized that one could have a sponsor for one episode or a season and I began to share the *Gardens 'n Plants* episodes on LinkedIn.

KEPT LEARNING

I also learned the pros and cons of paid hosting platforms ([Blubrry](#), [Libsyn](#), and [Buzzsprout](#)) and paid recording methods ([Streamyard](#) and [Squadcast](#)), should *Gardens 'n Plants* expand beyond the free Anchor and Zoom.

I subscribed to the daily [Podcast Business Journal](#) and joined the [Podcast Movement](#) and [Podcast Nation](#) Facebook groups. In August, I incurred my second podcasting expense: the \$200 fee to attend the virtual [Podcast Movement](#) conference in October.

It is now September 2020, a year since I watched my fellow GardenComm members sitting on the couches and talking about podcasts. I have learned so much yet I know the possibilities are endless and there is much more to learn. So when my fellow GardenComm members meet at the 2021 Williamsburg GardenComm symposium, I know I will be on that couch. 🌱

Region 4 Regional Director, **Peggy Riccio** manages [pegplant.com](#), an online resource for gardeners in the metro Washington, D.C. area. She also writes a monthly newsletter and co-produces the weekly *Gardens 'n Plants* podcast with **Teri Speight**, Region 2 Regional Director.



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Thanks to these GardenComm members for helping to grow the organization in this year. For every new member you bring in, you'll save \$20 on your 2021 membership dues.

ONE MEMBER

Kary Arimoto-Mercer
Kirk Ryan Brown
Natalie Carmoli
Carmen DeVito
Helen Newling Lawson
Eva Monheim
Kim Roman
Erin Schanen
Bobbie Schwartz
Lawrence Sherk
Thanksgiving Point
David Ward
Marianne Wilburn

TWO MEMBERS

Joan Bolton
Marie Butler
C.L. Fornari
Monica Hemingway
Grace Hensley
Kathy Jentz
Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENT

‘A Betrothal’

by Lanford Wilson

Sometimes our differences
are what brings
us together.

Produced with permission from Dramatists Play Service

A GARDENCOMM FUNDRAISER

Two Competitors, Two Irises and One Ingenious Chance to Win

Peer into the cutthroat world of iris breeding, where delicacy meets domination. The setting of Lanford Wilson’s 35-minute play, *A Betrothal*, is a large tent where two flower show exhibitors have sought refuge from a sudden rainfall and in the end learn that sometimes differences are just the thing that can bring people together.

The play will be available on demand December 3-6. Please join us for this fabulous and funny play and fundraiser, mounted especially for GardenComm and performed by **Natalie Carmolli** and Joe Carmolli and filmed by Adriana Robinson of **Spring Meadow Nursery**. **Pat Stone** will perform a musical introduction.

Natalie, Joe and Adriana have donated their time and services for this end-of-year fundraiser. GardenComm has special pricing for members and their guests. Since the play is available on demand, you don’t have to be available at a set time to watch. You can get a ticket for a specific day, and then have 48 hours to watch. With video on demand patrons, you can pause and rewind, something you can’t do that with scheduled content.

Purchase your tickets now! <https://www.showtix4u.com/event-details/41983>