

On the



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GARDENCOMM

Garden Communicators International



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

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Dear Readers:

The following article about an after tour was prepared before GardenComm's Board of Directors voted to go virtual with our 2021 conference, and to cancel the in-person event in Williamsburg, Virginia. Members and trade supporters have been notified about the cancellation.

GardenComm thanks Williamsburg's co-chairs, **Becky Heath** and **Marie Butler** as well as the other volunteers on the Local Arrangements Committee: **Marty Ross, Peggy Riccio, Marianne Willburn, Dawn Alleman, Lisa Ziegler, Catriona Erler** and **David Ellis** for all of their work in 2019 and 2020. We also thanks to the guests who wrote *On the QT* articles about the Williamsburg area in 2019 and 2020.

– The Editor

Richmond and Its Gardens

BY KATHY DUNCAN



In 1607, the English explored the river upstream from Jamestown, Virginia, to what would become Richmond. They built a fort at this upriver site in 1610, but it was soon abandoned. However, by 1700, the population of this settlement at the fall line of the James River was about 200. Prior to European settlement, the river was an integral part of the Powhatan Chiefdom, a group of approximately 32 tribes unified under a central leader, Wahunsunacock, father of Pocahontas. The location of a city at Richmond was logical since it marks the western end of tidal navigation. The river and falls are central to early industrialization and modern Richmond's water activities and walkways.

The history of the railroads in Richmond, Virginia, is celebrated with the city's Low Line.

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On the QT is the membership newsletter of the GardenComm: Garden Communicators International. It is published six times a year and distributed electronically.

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Gardening with Charlie Nardozi

Cris Blackstone (2022 R)

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REGION 6

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REGION 7

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gardening-enjoyed.com

Niki Jabbour (2021 R)

The Weekend Gardener on News

Talk Radio 95.7

Andrea Whitely (2022 R)

Andrea Whitely Garden Consultant

GardenComm Connects



The year 2020 will be one we will never forget. My first year as Executive Director was challenging, fun and tumultuous. The pandemic has caused us to approach membership, events and everything in our lives in a much different way than any of us could ever have imagined. We still came together (virtually) and remained safe while watching the world embrace gardening, providing a new audience for all of you. Let GardenComm be there to help you connect with colleagues and new gardening lovers.

EVENTS

We look to 2021 to be a better year, complete with a variety of virtual programs, thanks to the amazing work by the Education Committee led by **Maria Zampini** and **Kim Toscano**. Here is just a quick overview for first quarter.

- January 12, [There's a New Bud in Town: Autoflowering Cannabis, America's Next Tomato!](#), presented by **Jeff Lowenfels**.
- February 2, [Using Horticultural Therapy Values to Produce Content Your Audiences Will Love](#), presented by **Perla Curbelo**.
- March 11 - [Rising to the Top - Getting to the Top of Search Results](#), presented by **Stacey Hirvela**.

KEEP IN TOUCH, MORE IMPORTANT NOW THAN EVER

If you are seeing this, you are already subscribing to the award-winning premier publication, *On the QT*. I hope you will also sign up and check out our other communications.

- Our blog, *GardenComm Grows*
- The weekly "Clippings"
- Social channels: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

INCREASE YOUR VISIBILITY TO THE GARDENCOMM COMMUNITY

Our Virtual Program Sponsorship opportunities include benefits to promote your company and products to professional communicators in the green industry, including book authors, bloggers, staff editors, syndicated columnists, freelance writers, photographers, speakers, landscape designers, television and radio personalities, consultants, publishers, extension service agents and more. No other organization in the green industry has as much contact with the buying public as GardenComm members.

[Please review our premium packages and benefits.](#) We can work with any budget from \$250, \$500 and above.

MEMBERSHIP PAYS FOR ITSELF

If you have not yet renewed your 2021 membership, please do so. Pricing has not increased in recognition of the tough times. [See all the reasons to join and maximize your membership.](#)

I wish everyone a happy and healthy 2021. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can help with anything.

All the best,

Marla Schrager

mschrager@kellencompany.com



Agecroft Hall is a fine example of Tudor architecture in Richmond, Virginia.

CHALLENGING TOPOGRAPHY

The topography of the city is an interesting mix of hills and ravines with springs and streams that drain into the James River. Many of these are no longer visible, having been incorporated into the city's drainage system. The city was originally laid out in a grid pattern, though the topography of the hills and valleys made this a challenge. Public spaces were an afterthought. In the mid 1700s, common grounds were designated along the river. The steepness of Richmond's hills became ideal places for strolling and sledding.

In 1779, a legislative act set aside 12 acres of green space for a new state capital and government buildings. In 1816, Maximilian Godafroy used a topographical survey to plan tiered gardens and curved walkways—one of the first public spaces in the U.S. to be laid out on a hilly terrain. The garden included marble basins to capture natural springs, which were later replaced with fountains. The original tree saplings were nearly destroyed by roaming livestock but were then replaced by exotics. However, by the 1850s, Virginia native species were chosen for the first organized street planting in the city, including Capital Square. The hilly capital grounds now provide a pleasant walk with many new statues related to contributions of American Indians, Blacks and women.

IMPORTANCE OF CEMETERIES

In the early 1800s, cemeteries became landscaped green spaces for strolling and picnicking. Hollywood Cemetery, on a high bluff of the river toward the west of downtown, is the largest. Its winding roads offer

a view of the city and a large variety of trees and shrubbery. Several other cemeteries were established on the east side of Richmond, including Evergreen, where many notable African Americans are interred.

The Civil War left the city's streets and squares in need of repair. Wilfred Cutshaw was appointed as city engineer for parks and urban forestry. He developed several squares in the city that had been planned but not brought into reality. Most were a topographical challenge, so walkways and roads became switchbacks for traversing the hilly terrain. However, keep off the grass signs were numerous, with some exceptions for passive play by children.

RICHMOND GARDENS: PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

A bonus, post-symposium tour, Richmond Gardens: Past, Present & Future, was to feature Agecroft, Maymont, the Low Line, Evergreen Cemetery, an urban middle school and an overview of Richmond: Biophilic City. The GardenComm tour in Richmond included two historic gardens. Maymont is a 100-acre Victorian estate and public park, which contains Maymont Mansion (now a historic house museum, an arboretum, Japanese Garden, Italian Garden, a carriage collection, native wildlife exhibits, Children's Farm and Robins Nature Center with numerous state and national champion trees. Built by James and Sallie Dooley in 1893, the estate was willed to the city upon their death and became a city park in 1926. The November-December issue of *On the QT* has a story about Maymont.

The second, Agecroft Hall and Gardens, is a

15th century Tudor manor moved from England to Richmond and reconstructed in 1928 for the Thomas C. Williams family. In 1969, the house and Tudor gardens were opened to the public.

Capital Trees, a public-private partnership, is restoring and expanding green spaces with emphasis on native plants, stormwater management, and convenient access for all Richmonders. One of Capital Trees' initiatives is the Low Line—5½ acres along the James River and Kanawha Canal for pedestrians and cyclists. The trail runs beneath railroad trestles. In contrast, the High Line in New York City was built on the trestles.

Richmond is a typical modern city that demonstrates that gardens and public green spaces are intrinsic to the city and have evolved over time. From intimate city gardens tucked behind closely spaced houses to open greens part of Virginia Commonwealth University, green space is valued by the urban dweller. Richmond is working to expand access to nature for its residents and is on its way to become a biophilic city. Come visit the capital of Virginia on this interesting tour through a diverse collection of gardens featuring the past, present and future of this thriving city. 🌿

Kathy Duncan moved to Richmond, Virginia, several years ago and loves living in the city. Interested in designing urban gardens that provide food for homeowners and pollinators as well as incorporate historically appropriate plant material, her tiny urban garden has been an oasis during the pandemic. Kathy is certified by the Virginia Society of Landscape Designers, is an ISA certified arborist and holds an M.S. in Horticulture from Virginia Tech.




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 crisblackstone@gmail.com.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE JO ELLEN MEYERS SHARP



Dear Members,

Like you and I have, GardenComm leadership and our organization struggled in 2020, grappling with so many things none of us has experienced, all tethered to the COVID-19 pandemic. I'm pleased to report we all adapted as best we could.

We are proud of members who quickly reshaped their business model to adapt to the demands of the times. They continue to serve readers, customers, clients and others, refocusing on what people need from garden communicators today.

It's exciting to see so many of our members adapting to giving talks via Zoom and similar programs. Thanks to **C.L. Fornari** for the excellent [webinar on Zooming](#), which can be purchased for viewing. GardenComm recognizes virtual is a new way of communicating, so virtual presentations have been added as a new category for [Garden Media Awards](#).

Recently, **Kathy Jentz** gave the step-by-step basics for hosting your own podcast on our blog, [GardenComm Grows](#).

It was exciting to present *A Betrothal* by Lanford Wilson as an end-of-year fundraiser for GardenComm. Nearly 90 people bought tickets and we raised nearly \$1,400 from the play and donations. Special thanks to actors **Natalie Carmolli** and Joe Carmolli, videographer Adriana Robinson from Spring Meadow Nursery, **Kelly D. Norris** for the introduction and Becky Stone and **Pat Stone** publishers of *GreenPrints* magazine, for their musical lead-in.

Our [GardenComm Facebook group](#) continues to grow and is increasingly active. We've seen members and nonmembers reach out to each, asking and answering questions, including contracts, program ideas and work situations.

We regularly monitor what's going on with COVID-19. We are discussing ways we can come together—regionally or internationally by hosting meetings for members to stay in touch.

Lastly, I want to thank each of you for being a member and contributing to our organization. Our members are our heart and soul. Now is membership renewal time, so please take [a few minutes to do so](#).

All the best for 2021,

Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp
jemsharp46@gmail.com

Charles Brosius Thomas

September 19, 1935 – December 7, 2020



Charles and Sally Thomas.

Charles B. Thomas passed away peacefully at the age of 85 on December 7, 2020, surrounded by his loving family. Born in Frederick, Maryland, on September 19, 1935, he led a full and rich life.

His career was long and varied to suit his capacious mind and tireless spirit. He earned a B.S. from the University of Maryland (College Park) in 1957. Charles then served the in U.S. Army Artillery, where he trained Fire Direction Center Staff until 1962. Shortly before leaving the

FOUNDED WATER GARDEN SOCIETY

In 1975, Charles and Sally purchased Three Springs Fisheries, which had been started by his grandfather in 1917, and changed the name to Lilypons Water Gardens. As president of the company, he totally revitalized the world of water gardening, not only in the United States, but in Europe as well, guiding the entire industry with his own unique sense of purpose and vision. In 1984, Charles founded the International Waterlily and Water Garden Society (IWGS), an esteemed group of water garden enthusiasts and companies that still thrives today. He discovered several new waterlily hybrids, including *Nymphaea* 'Louise' and *N.* 'Virginia'. He retired from Lilypons in 1998 and moved with Sally to Blue Summit, Pennsylvania. His four daughters took over the family business, and today Margaret Thomas Koogle, the eldest, serves as president.

In Blue Summit, he became a substitute schoolteacher for the Waynesboro School district, teaching everything from history to science. Charles was famous for singing his favorite song, "Sweet Violets", an old Dinah Shore tune to them. His students all remember him for being kind and encouraging. His Facebook page is rich with memories from students, declaring he was the "best sub ever."

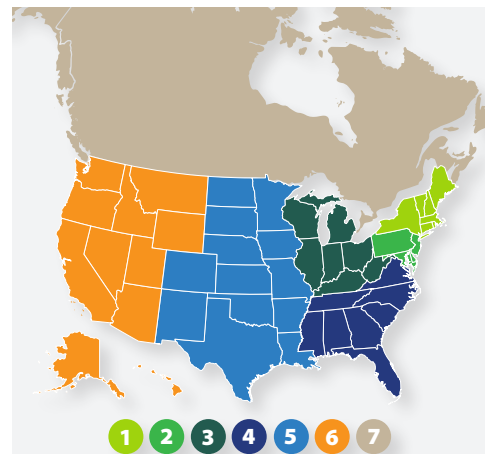
FORMER DIRECTOR

Charles joined our organization in 1982 when it was called GWAA (Garden Writers Association of America) and served as a Director from Region 2 (before there were Regional and National Directors). He shepherded many of our long-time members (when they were new to our group), introducing them to others. Several Regional Meetings included tours of Lilypons.

Charles was famous for his sweet jokes and puns on Facebook as well as in person. Vital and charming, he was known for his gentle and fun demeanor as well as for his wisdom, kindness and sense of duty.

He is survived by his wife Sally, his daughters Margaret, Virginia, Victoria, Elizabeth, 13 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. He will be missed by all who knew him.

— Denise Schreiber and Cathy Wilkinson Barash



REGIONAL EVENTS

Region 4 is eyeing the possibility of a Connect Meeting on January 29, 2021 in Columbia, South Carolina, if the South Carolina Green Industry Association is able to keep their [SC Green Winter Conference & Trade Show](#) in-person as is currently planned.

Regional Director **Helen Lawson** said the organizer would make media passes available on a limited basis on Friday morning. Attendance is restricted to limit COVID-19 risks.

If this comes to pass, **Kirk Brown** has offered to line up some additional tours that could even make this a Regional Meeting, a revenue generating activity, but we are, of course, not putting much stock in planning or hoping. Right now, we are just wanting to put out a "Save the Date....Maybe."

MEMBER NEWS

Chanticleer will host David Culp for a virtual Zoom lecture about his latest book, *A Year at Brandywine Cottage*, at 3 p.m. Sunday, January 10. [Register now.](#)

One of GardenComm's new members, **Heather Andrews**, aka the Thoughtful Gardener, is offering an online course on "5 Weeks to a Fabulous Fall Pollinator Garden." [Visit her website to register.](#)

Kim Roman, Square Foot Gardening 4 U, has extended her holiday class offer for GardenComm members and their friends. All six of her online veggie garden classes, more than seven hours of learning, have been bundled for a super price of \$50 until the end of February. [Available at sfg4u.com.](#)

Submitted by: **Teri Speight**

Australia: Too Many Mandarins Seed Self-sufficient Communities



GardenComm is, as we all know, truly international and we have members all over the globe. One of our newest members hails from God's Own Country, which is the term nearly all Australians,

especially Queenslanders, refer to a very special part of Australia. Known as the Sunshine Coast, and more specifically the food bowl region called the hinterland, it's where the sun nearly always shines and the earth is a deep rich red color, filled with minerals making growing your own fruit and vegetables seem easy. It is an important growing region particularly for sugar cane and pineapples.

Helen Andrew joined GardenComm recently to "connect with like-minded people, to find support and build her network outside of Australia. Helen, a very proud Queenslander (like all Queenslanders, I might add) lives in a very beautiful part of the world that has incredible white sandy beaches and rainforest within 20 minutes from her home. She lives in a unique part of the world where the bunya pine tree (*Araucaria bidwillii*) is naturally occurring.

Helen said residents of this area need to be super careful when the plants fruit because the pine trees produce enormous cones, which contain up to 100 nuts and weigh up to 30 pounds, making them dangerous when they fall on the unsuspecting. Helen loves the variety of plants that she can grow in this beautifully rich soil, combined with a sub-tropical climate. She enjoys spending time in the garden working on projects with her husband.

INSPIRED BY FATHER

Her father, who managed to grow most of the food the family ate in their small backyard, introduced Helen to gardening. "I didn't understand then or even in my early 20s, how valuable and rewarding gardening was. It was not until I had my own children that I wanted to grow some of the food we ate as a family that I started my gardening journey," she said.



Helen Andrew's mandarins launch self-sufficient communities.

Helen and her husband started their garden from small beginnings and gradually grew it as she learned how to work alongside nature. Most importantly for Helen, gardening is about connection: "Connection to my food, the earth and the wonderful experience of watching how nature works."

Like many of us, in the early days she experienced many disappointments. In time she understood that the disappointments were part of the learning experience. Over time, this keen gardener has experienced many successes. And with that, she was rewarded with a great sense of accomplishment, which has driven her engagement with gardening

and her desire to share the knowledge with others. Helen loves sharing her gardening experience. "As a novice, untrained gardener, I wanted people to learn from me that you don't need to do a course or have a university degree to enjoy the art of gardening," she said.

INSPIRING OTHERS

Challenging the formal pathway that many take to a career in gardening and horticulture, Helen urges us to think differently. "I want to inspire those who like the idea of gardening to give it a go. We have many people who are very experienced at gardening educating

— Continues on page 7

others, but I believe it is important to also show people that you can be successful at gardening without a formal education. Real life experience, patience and persistence can create a thriving garden," she said.

In a COVID-19 environment, this rings true more than ever, where so many are giving gardening a try for the first time and need clear, simple guidelines provided by skilled communicators.

Helen operates Spare Harvest, a very successful, web-based, community building organization. This groundbreaking concept started with the simple problem of her having too many mandarins. Helen tried to share them with her personal network, but many of those people also had too many mandarins and didn't want her excess. Sadly, she ended the season burying much of her good fruit in the ground.

BIRTH OF MARKETPLACE

After a couple of seasons following this pattern, Helen was motivated to find a way to share her mandarins with strangers—people who did not garden but wanted to

experience eating homegrown produce. "After sharing my idea with a few people, we managed to build a simple platform to test the idea, which was well received. Today, it has grown into a community that has a marketplace for people to exchange anything in the food and garden theme." Spare Harvest now sees people sharing their garden produce and their knowledge of gardening with others who don't have a garden but want to grow their own food.

Spare Harvest is a platform for sharing anything from pots, cuttings, seeds, plants, food dehydrators and glass jars to kombucha scobies, jams, pickles and much more. It has all been sourced, shared, swapped and sold to a community of like-minded people. "We all have enough, we just need to distribute what we have more of fairly to ensure everyone is cared for and we don't waste anything," Helen said.

Spare Harvest has been growing in popularity during the pandemic. Helen said COVID-19 has affected it mostly in a positive way. People have been drawn to Spare Harvest at a time when there is increased

interest in gardening, living a little more self-sufficiently and connecting with their community.

SELF-SUFFICIENT COMMUNITIES

Helen believes, "We can all live more self-sufficiently if we all come together and build community sufficiency, and that is what Spare Harvest does."

Recently the organization has seen an increase in people wanting to learn about and share the concept of Spare Harvest with their community. Spare Harvest offers the tools to help them through these challenging times.

Spare Harvest is an organization for our times; it brings together gardening for food and a wonderful sense of community through sharing. Helen Andrew is a dynamic force in communication and community building at a time when the world needs this more than ever before. 🌱

Andrea Whitely is a well-known Perth-based garden consultant and radio personality. She's a GardenComm Regional Director in Region 7 of and a member of Horticulture Media Association. A writer, she has an [award-winning blog](#).



Chanticleer Is Closed for the Season, but There's Plenty to See Online

Chanticleer is closed for the season and will reopen March 31 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesdays to Sundays, until October 31. View how Chanticleer gardeners remove seasonal, non-hardy plants from the garden and fill up their greenhouse in this [virtual look behind the scenes](#). If you need a Chanticleer fix through the winter, we will be sharing virtual tour videos weekly on [Chanticleer's website](#) and [Chanticleer's YouTube channel](#).

Air spading is a way to dig safely around trees. This fall, Chanticleer staff transformed an area around the base of a honey locust tree into a new gravel bed. The bed was installed to provide a layer of safety around the delicate roots of the tree. View the process of creating the bed and air spading in [this video tutorial](#).



AmericanHort

AmericanHort's programs feature The Garden of Words team

Digital marketing expert, founder and CEO of The Garden of Words **Katie Elzer-Peters** and her team are teaching AmericanHort's E-Commerce Mastery Series. Two sessions remain. [Contact Katie for more info](#).

"Online Marketing Quick-Start" January 27th at 2:00 - 3:30 pm ET. After this workshop, participants will be ready to start marketing their ecommerce solutions with clear, compelling language and visuals to excite their customers and communicate offerings and processes. Hear real-word examples and work with fellow green-industry business owners to develop your plan of attack. We'll cover web-site language to close the sale, using social media effectively with limited time and money as well as email marketing made simple. Leave

this third and final session with your marketing road map and start creating your simple marketing assets so they're ready and waiting to quickly finalize with changes and updates during the season.

"Curbside Pickup Powerup," February 17, 2:00 - 3:30 pm ET. In this collaborative workshop, you'll hear from independent garden center owners who have successfully implemented streamlined curbside pickup and online order/delivery programs without huge budgets. You'll identify the key components of the programs and begin planning your program. Each participant will leave with a personalized, drafted process document that includes assets, software needed, itemized steps, and expected results.

Trends Report Available

Garden Media's 2021 Garden Trends Report: *The Great Reset* is [available for download now](#). This year's report offers a peek into what will be trending in horticulture in 2021 and beyond. These six industry trends are going to shape the future post COVID-19, push business strategy pivots and create a shift in home and work. 🌱

Garden Communicators and the Story of Horticulture Plastics



During the 1967 landmark film *The Graduate*, Mr. McGuire (played by Walter Brooke) gave young graduate Benjamin Braddock (Dustin Hoffman) one word of advice for a great career, “Plastics.”

Not a word was discussed about the deleterious effects of the plastic industry that would come.

At the time, the horticulture industry was grappling on a small scale with the throwaway society, but it wasn't pressured to examine the production practices of the day—especially in greenhouses. In the run up to the first Earth Day in 1970, some garden centers had begun to take back plastic pots from their own customers, but financial reward was not a so much of a factor as the “feel good” association consumers gained.

Worldwide, there was an awakening about eco-friendly practices, but reaching customers was not in the scope of work the plastics industry tackled.

Presently many international greenhouse suppliers have conducted research and surveys as well as talked to focus groups and local outlets to get feedback to help them conduct their businesses with an increased awareness about the use of plastics.

By slimming down the thickness of plant pots, liners, trays and hangers, there has been a significant reduction of plastic. Sometimes a thicker plastic is used to extend the life of the product so it can be reused many times before being recycled.

CONSUMER AWARENESS ON THE RISE

The focus on consumer awareness is helping suppliers of plastic products work on solutions for the horticulture and landscape industries. An overwhelming number of surveys show that consumers are willing to take a minimal responsibility for recycling plastic, but they believe it's up to the manufacturers and suppliers—even greenhouses and garden centers—to shoulder the bulk of the eco-responsibility.

For garden communicators, knowing where



D.S. Cole Growers in London, New Hampshire, sort and store their plastic for collection by East Jordan Recycling Company.

to look for the most up-to-date, vetted information about this complex topic is essential. Greenhouse Grower is a treasure chest of articles from reliable sources. It includes numerous research reports about reducing wastefulness in the industry. In the searchable database of articles, you can find documentation on every aspect of plastic in the green. A recurring theme is understanding which plastics are used and which need to be separated in recycling efforts.

NOT ALL PLASTIC IS THE SAME

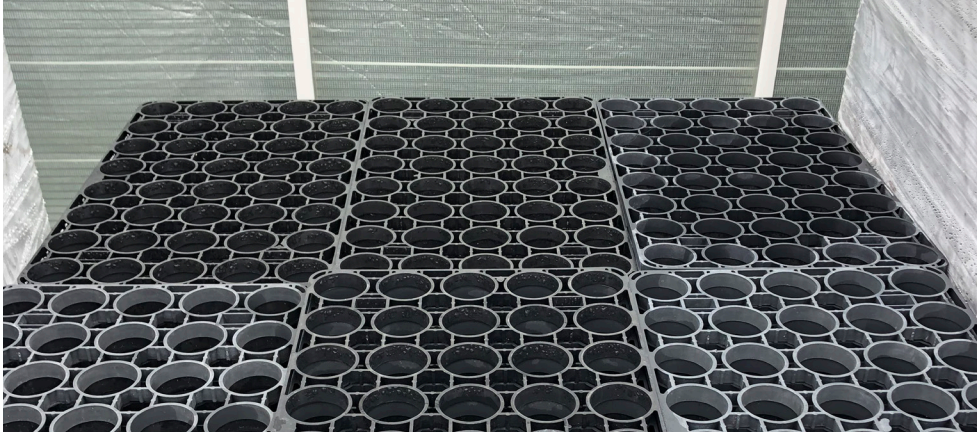
The information available to us not only spans what plastics are recyclable, but also which are used in progressively diminished quality in the industry. As garden communicators, we are in a unique position to help educate our readers, followers, stakeholders and those in our spheres of influence to promote uses of certain plastics over others. Particularly interesting work is available from Michigan

State University. [Check out Michigan State University Extension's "Go Green: Which horticultural products can be recycled and where"](#) to learn about the differences among plastics used in the gardening world and eco-recycling uses.

SORTING CRITICAL TO RECYCLING

The trailblazing East Jordan Recycling Company (family owned since 1947 when it began as a pallet manufacturer) is now at the forefront of plastic collection, recycling and thermoforming technology for the U.S. greenhouse production industry. With a sophisticated network of pick-ups and deliveries to their main plant in Michigan, the company has designed a system for big box stores and independent garden centers to pick up stacked and stored plastics for recycling using batch-staging locations.

– Continues on page 9



PHOTOS COURTESY CRIS BLACKSTONE

Above: Spacer trays are used multiple seasons before collection, storage, pick up and transport to the recycling facility. Below left: Spacer trays are needed to keep seasonal plants, such as poinsettias and mums, upright for watering, adequate airflow and perfect growth habit, all of which creates an inescapable use of plastic. The key is implementing ecologically sound business practices to mitigate plastic waste.



Participants in this network sort their plastic by thickness of pots, liner trays and miscellaneous trade products like spacer trays and plant hangers. They shrink wrap products to be collected and store them outdoors when an economically feasible stockpile is ready. Economics are a huge factor in this company's success. They have the raw material needed to create new product, the contributors earn credits toward newly fabricated products and retailers can promote their business as ecologically friendly. This type of promotion has been shown to be effective in driving more customer visits and ultimately increasing their sales.

Botanic and public gardens are in the consumer loop of intensive plastic use, too. There are many instances of creative uses of volunteers to help wash, sterilize and sort the many pots and other plastic products at sites

such as the Missouri Botanical Garden and the Chicago Botanic Garden. These are places where horticulture experts and outreach specialists created innovations in volunteer participation. As volunteers perform the tasks, the gardens promote awareness and engagement with the public about responsible approaches to plastics in their gardens.

The stories around plastic use in the horticultural industry are complex, enlightening and positive in their big picture outcomes. We may need some patience, but as garden communicators, we can help increase awareness about recycling and closing the loop of plastic use and misuse.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

[Association of Professional Landscape Designers' white paper](#), referenced in GardenComm's *On the QT*, Sept/Oct 2020 issue, "Plastic Pots and the Green Industry: Production, Use, Disposal and Environmental Impact"

[Floral Daily](#) – worldwide collection of articles on various sustainability topics

[Greenhouse Grower](#) – extensive database

[Greenhouse Management](#) – searchable database, comprehensive material on large-scale, controlled environment topics 🌿

Cris Blackstone serves as a Conservation Commissioner for her town, her county and the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions. She's the New Hampshire Association of Landscape Professionals' Education Coordinator, connecting the Master Gardeners and Natural Resources Stewards. Cris is GardenComm's blog editor and a Regional Director in Region 1. Find her on Instagram at [make-scents_nh](#).

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a new vision for
ROSES

OSO EASY HOT PAPRIKA® landscape rose

read more



On the QT is partnering with the National Garden Bureau to promote all of the “days of” that relate to gardening or nature. [Garden365](#) gives us a heads-up on celebrations, special events and community activities that we can share with our audiences.

JANUARY 2021

- 1 National Hangover Day/Bloody Mary Day
— #NationalHangoverDay

- 5 National Hydrangea Day
— #NationalHydrangeaDay



- 6 National Bean Day
— #NationalBeanDay

- 15 National Hat Day
— #ShowUsYourGardenHat

- 19 National Popcorn Day

- 27 National Seed Swap Day
— #NationalSeedSwapDay



February is National Bird Feeding Month

Tip: A water source keeps the birds coming year-round.

FEBRUARY 2021

- 2 Wear Red Day, Groundhog Day

- 3 Feed the Birds Day

- 14 Valentine's Day

- 17 National Cabbage Day/Random Acts of Kindness Day

- 19 Presidents Day

- 20 Cherry Pie Day

- 22 Cook a Sweet Potato Day

- 27 National Strawberry Day

- 28 Floral Design Day



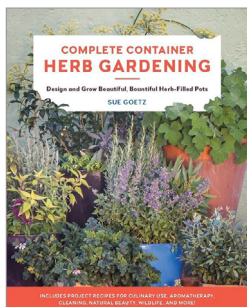
SUE GOETZ

Complete Container Herb Gardening: Design and Grow Beautiful, Bountiful Herb-filled Pots

Cool Springs Press

192 pages, paperback, \$26.99

Published December 22, 2020



Sue Goetz walks you through the ins and outs of growing these fragrant and flavorful plant treasures in containers. Highlighted by gorgeous photography, Sue also presents over a dozen container recipes for mixing and matching your favorite herbs to create stunning and useful combinations.

From the perfect culinary partnerships

and natural aromatherapy combos to collections of herbs for natural beauty and chemical-free cleaning products, these herbal arrangements are no-fail and perfectly

Instagram-worthy.

NIKI JABBOUR

Growing Under Cover: Techniques for a More Productive, Weather-Resistant, Pest-Free Vegetable Garden

Storey Publishing

216 pages, paperback, \$24.95

Published December 22, 2020



Niki Jabbour, a two-time winner of the American Horticultural Society Book Award, is back with her fourth book. Increasingly unpredictable weather patterns and pest infestations challenge today's vegetable gardeners. Her solution: *Growing Under Cover*. In this in-depth guide, Jabbour shows how to use row covers, shade cloth, low

tunnels, cold frames, hoop houses and other protective structures to create controlled growing spaces for vegetables to thrive. Photographed in her own super-productive garden, Jabbour highlights the many benefits of using protective covers to plant earlier, eliminate pests and harvest a healthier, heartier bounty year-round. With enthusiasm, inventive techniques and proven, firsthand knowledge, this book provides invaluable advice from a popular and widely respected gardening authority.

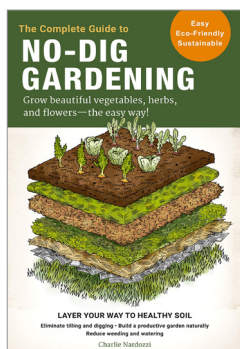
CHARLIE NARDOZZI

The Complete Guide to No-Dig Gardening

Cool Springs Press

128 pages, paperback, \$24.99

Published December 15, 2020



With step-by-step instructions, you'll discover how to build healthy, easy-to-plant garden soil by adding layers of organic matter, using one of several different no-dig techniques. Whether you garden in a small, urban backyard or on several acres in the country, **Charlie Nardozzi's** simple approach lets you grow more food

and flowers than ever before, and leave the gas-guzzling tiller behind forever. Plus, when you don't disturb the soil, weed seeds stay buried deep where they can't germinate and carbon is kept sequestered in the ground. No-dig gardening techniques reduce watering and lead to a healthy population of beneficial soil microbes that help feed your plants by breaking down organic matter and releasing nutrients.

KELLY D. NORRIS

New Naturalism: Designing and Planting a Resilient, Ecologically Vibrant Home Garden

Cool Springs Press

208 pages, hardcover, \$30

To be published, January 2, 2021



In *New Naturalism*, horticulturist and modern plantsman Kelly D. Norris shares his inspiring, ecologically sound vision for home gardens created with stylish—yet naturalistic—plantings that mimic the wild spaces we covet, such as meadows, prairies, woodlands and stream sides—far from the contrived, formal, high maintenance plantings of the past. *New Naturalism* approaches

the planting beds around our homes as ecological systems. If properly designed and planted, these areas can support positive environmental change, increase plant and animal diversity and create a more resilient space that's less reliant on artificial inputs. And they do it all while looking beautiful and improving property values. 🌿

Upcoming GardenComm EVENTS

Webinars

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

Cannabis is quickly becoming legal in a number of states. However, growing has been difficult for the home gardener. Traditional cannabis varieties are photoperiod sensitive, take six months to produce and grow extremely large—not a home-garden friendly plant.

Join award-winning author and GardenComm Hall of Fame member **Jeff Lowenfels** as he discusses a new kind of cannabis, perfect for home gardener—autoflowering cannabis. Grown from seed, autoflowering cannabis flowers in seven to nine weeks on houseplant size plants! Not since the sugar snap pea has a new plant introduction held as much promise to become the “Next Tomato.”

This is the plant that will make growing cannabis easy for regular gardeners who want to grow their own. Come learn the what, why and how of this wonderful, easy-to-grow new plant.

Tuesday, February 2

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET

How Horticultural Therapy Will Grab Your Audience's Attention while Increasing Their Well-being in 2021

with **Perla Sofia Cubelo**



As garden communicators, we are always on the lookout for potential content that can spark our audience's attention and add value to their well-being. Today, more than ever, our readers, viewers and listeners are intentionally embracing

their gardening and plant activities to cope with a myriad of circumstances from physical and mental health issues to the grieving of lost loved ones, their jobs and normalcy.

Perla Sofia Cubelo will show how to add horticulture therapy knowledge that will even help increase your audience. Horticulture therapists are professionals trained to design and facilitate horticultural activities with the intentional purpose to enhance people's lives within different scenarios and populations.

Thursday, March 11

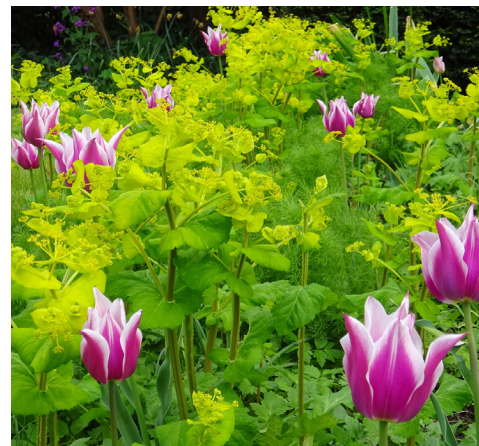
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM ET

Rising to the Top: Increase Your Search Results with Stacey Hirvela

Content! Content! Content! We create it all day long, but how can we make sure our intended audience sees it? The answer is SEO—search engine optimization. Whether you find SEO

intimidating or simply want to learn a few new tips, **Stacey Hirvela** of Proven Winners ColorChoice Shrubs will teach you how to select and frame topics, format text and write copy for the best Google results possible.

The skills, concepts, and ideas presented will help shift your mindset to writing for SEO, so that you not only increase your current audience but also increase the potential for additional work.



Bulb expert **Jacqueline van der Kloet** pairs *Ballade* tulip with the perennial lady's mantle as part of [Colorblends' bulb design notes](#)

Wednesday, March 24

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM ET

How to Pair Spring Bulbs with Perennials for a Long-lasting Show

with **Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp**

By March, your spring bulbs are either in full bloom or starting to peek out of the soil. Bulbs, by themselves, are such a welcome sight that it's easy to miss out on your chance for a truly spectacular spring display by pairing them with perennials and small shrubs. **Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp**, GardenComm President and owner of Write For You LLC, will show which perennials emerge later, letting bulbs truly shine, and which perennials will grow up and hide bulb foliage as it withers after the flowers fade.

Just like wine with a meal, though, some pairings work better than others. Learn which perennials complement spring, summer and fall bulbs by providing color, texture and camouflage. Get tips for adding shrubs to your bulb mix to provide long-term, four-season structure and interest in your garden.

A longtime gardener, Jo Ellen anxiously awaits the arrival of spring bulbs in her Indianapolis landscape. She worked in a large, independent garden center for 20 years and trials about 100 plants a year. She blogs at hoosiergardener.com.

— Continues on page 13

A Reliable Resource for Garden Communicators

Founded in 1922, the **American Horticultural Society (AHS)** connects people with plants, and garden communicators with reliable information and valuable opportunities.

AHS member benefits include:

- Our well-respected bimonthly magazine, **THE AMERICAN GARDENER**, which is read and contributed to by leading garden writers
- 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



The native oakleaf hydrangea blooms in summer. The leaves turn a rich wine-red for fall and winter beauty.

Tuesday, April 6 • 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM ET

The Tropical Paradise Garden with Summer Bulbs with **Brent** and **Becky Heath**

From the tropical rain forest, the sunny shores of the Mediterranean, the veldt of South Africa and the slopes of the Andes come bold, lush leaves and the myriad of stunning diverse flowers of summer bulbs. **Brent** and **Becky Heath**, bulb growers from Gloucester, Virginia, and owners of Brent and Becky's Bulbs, will give you ideas on how to weave these spectacular bulb plants into your own relaxing, tropical garden getaway.

Their breath-taking slides will show you how to integrate summer bulbs with annuals, perennials, ground covers, trees and shrubs to create your own ultimate patio planter, window box, living sculpture or jungle. You'll also gather ideas on how to build the ultimate evening garden, including luminescent, light colored, fragrant flowers. Let's plan and plant something different this summer.



Monday, April 22

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET

Talking to Strangers: How to Master the Interview with **Mary-Kate Mackey**

As garden communicators, it's our job to consistently learn, communicate and dig a little deeper. Author and writing coach **Mary-Kate Mackey** will discuss the techniques needed to be a compassionate, strategic and efficient interviewer.

She will discuss tips for proper preparation, phone interviews, email responses and attentive listening so you can get the most from each subject, regardless the topic and create engaging content from your efforts.

Thursday, May 6

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET

Hydrangea Happy Hour (Part Three): Growing Oakleaf and Climbing Hydrangeas with **C.L. Fornari**

In this webinar, we will celebrate hydrangea happiness using the native oakleaf (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) and the climbing species (*H. anomala ssp. petiolaris*). **C.L. Fornari** will guide our discovery of new varieties and show how they differ from the original species plants. Learn how to prune these varieties and where they are most appropriately planted. Questions will be answered at the end of the webinar.

C.L. is an author, speaker and podcaster. She has grown all types of hydrangeas for 30 years and is the administrator of the Hydrangea Happiness Facebook group. C.L. lives on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, where the blue mophead hydrangea is the region's signature plant. In 2015 she started the Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival, where private gardens are open to the public every year in July. C.L. can be found online at: www.GardenLady.com.

[Click here for details and to register.](#)

NEW &
Noteworthy



Charlier Receives Graycliff Diamond Award

The Frank Lloyd Wright-designed [Graycliff](#) house museum in Derby, New York, has honored **Jim**

Charlier with a [Diamond Award](#) for his role as former board member, Board Vice President, Chair of its Marketing Committee and promoter of the newly restored gardens. The Diamond Award recognizes individuals and groups that have had a significant impact furthering the mission of the Graycliff Conservancy.

The gardens at Graycliff are one of the few Frank Lloyd Wright property gardens designed in Wright's own hand. Ellen Biddle Shipman, one of America's first female landscape architects, designed subsequent changes and additions to the gardens.

Graycliff, completed in 1928, was the summer home to industrialist Darwin D. Martin. Wright had previously designed the Martin House in Buffalo, New York. Graycliff was a significant step in Wright's Organic Architecture, taking cues from its setting, including being made from stones from the 80 foot cliff it sits on overlooking Lake Erie. Visit ExperienceGraycliff.org.



Jentz Begins Two New Editor Positions

Kathy Jentz, Region 2 National Director, accepted the editor position of [Fanfare](#), the magazine for Region 3 of the

American Daylily Society. It currently is published twice a year, spring and fall, with plans to add a summer issue.

On January 1, she assumes the editor position at [The Azalea](#), the quarterly journal of the Azalea Society of America.



2020: My Four R Quest



Last January, I proclaimed 2020 as the year of my quest to do a better job to reduce, reuse, recycle and refuse (the four Rs). I committed to trying something new and plant-based every week and then report about it so we could share promising practices and products to improve our world. I often experienced epic failures and sometimes irritating disappointment. But more often, I found a cool new product or way of doing things.

At the same time, the process raised some challenging and unresolved issues. Pair that with a global health crisis which has given a new, so-called respectability to one-time use products and, frankly, I fear we're going backward on our quest to make the four Rs a permanent way of life.

The first months of my tests found some winners including reusable cloth produce bags and paper sandwich bags. Duds, however included bamboo toilet paper and beeswax food wraps. Then the world changed. Everything about how we interact, buy food and frankly live was limited and transformed.

COVID-19 VS REUSABLE BAGS

Suddenly, my eco-friendly cloth reusable grocery bags were no longer allowed in stores for fear of my bringing a virus into the building. At my local stores, the only choice was plastic bags supplied by the retailer. Deeply disappointing, but certainly understandable given what we did not know at the time about the spread of the illness. Even more frustrating was that all those forced-upon-me plastic grocery bags could not be returned to the store as usual for recycling. So there went two Rs—reuse and recycle.

I took to refusing (another R) bags all together and tediously placed all scanned items back into my cart individually to unload



Bamboo Toilet Paper – Ultimately scratchy and not so eco-friendly, since it's not made in the U.S.

into my own bags in my car. Definitely not something most people would do. (Author Craig Stauffer hit the nail on the head with his article "Are Consumers Swapping Sustainability for Safety?")

And though the illness in no way impacted the lower gastro-intestinal track, the hoarding of toilet paper made my bamboo toilet paper dud suddenly worthy. (None of the excellent recycled paper TP brands like Seventh Generation were available, either.) Although social scientists will spend years analyzing why people hoard what they do in challenging times, I hope instead that this TP experience puts a stronger focus on the production of the product itself. My tushy and likely yours loves a soft-yet-strong, brilliant white TP experience. I shifted to finding the bamboo TP not so bad.

BAMBOO'S ORIGIN

But wait. Bamboo raises all kinds of questions. During the early months, I tried five different products made of bamboo. Bamboo is awesome, right? It's a plant. It's sustainable and fast growing. However, bamboo is not grown in the United States. So, everything made of bamboo had to be shipped here from elsewhere—at what cost for fuel, transportation, man- and womanpower? So, the jury is still out on bamboo. (Anyone want to start a bamboo farm?)

My quest continued, albeit slowed since many of the things I wanted to try simply were not available in stores or online. Once shipping and trucking channels normalized, I was able to try out some more winners (plant-cellulose and walnut sponges, zero-tree paper) and

– Continues on page 15

duds (reusable bread bags, plastic-free bandages).

Then came a unique opportunity for a behind-the-scenes tour of a multi-material recycling facility in Indianapolis. Ray's Trash Service was born from one man who was taking his trash to the dump in the 1960s when neighbors began asking him if he'd take theirs, too. One year later, he'd quit his job and Ray's empire began. Seeing how they separate all of the materials they receive and efficiently sort for meaningful resale to others who will make new materials from the old was impressive. So why don't more people recycle?

NOT ALWAYS EASY TO RECYCLE

I know the answer, and so do you. It's not the easy choice for most. Where I live in rural Indiana, there are no companies that will pick up residential recycling. Hence, most people dump everything in their trash. At our home, we collect our recycling and drive to a community-organized Ray's collection site. Unfortunately, other people (jerks) dump their trash and all sorts of disgusting things into the bins. Ray's tells us that over time, if the dumping continues, they won't place bins in those locations because they cannot recycle ANYTHING in a bin that has a certain percentage of contaminants.

So, if recycling and reusing are challenging—the only things left to focus on are reducing and refusing. Do you really need a straw (whether paper or plastic)? Unless you have a medical condition, refuse the straw and drink from the glass. With all the take-out and home-delivery of meals you've been doing, don't let them put plastic utensils in your order. Seriously, you have flatware at home. Facemasks are the norm and will be for some time. Stop with the single-use masks. Invest in (or make) good quality cloth masks and wash them.

What's my take-away for the Four R quest? The single biggest thing you can do is refuse, but don't be a jerk about it. No one appreciates a high-and-mighty know-it-all, especially during stressful times. Case in point—what happened at the end of our Ray's tour. After an educational and fun (yes, fun) tour, Ray's staff was passing out a giveaway to everyone (marketing is everywhere). It was an adorable miniature trash bin for your desk, and it was, wait for it—plastic. As our delightful hostess approached me, I thought I just quietly said, "No thank you, I'm trying to refuse plastic." But some of my tour mates overheard me and im-



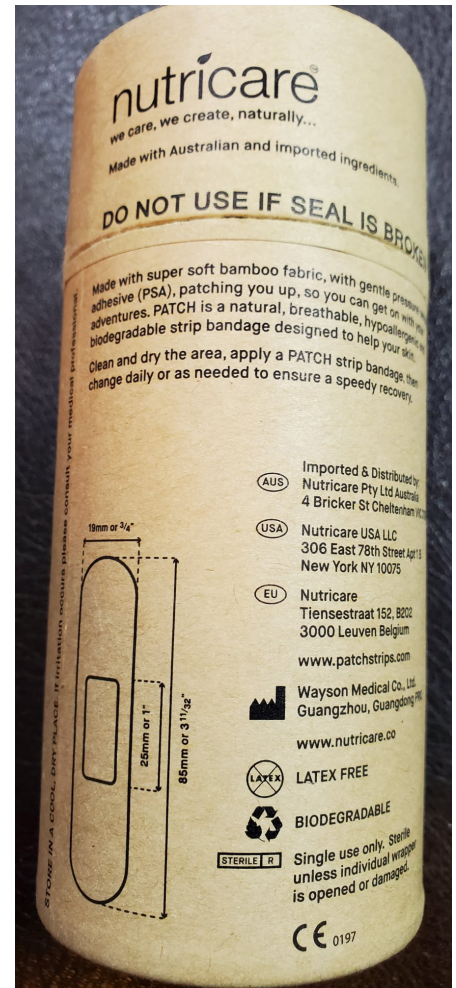
Bread Bag – A bust for keeping bread fresh



The best plant-based sponge is not only eco-friendly, but performs better than the synthetic brands.



Excellent copier paper that is made from 100% sugarcane waste fiber



Inability to stay on makes them an unrealistic alternative to your usual brand.

mediately started rattling off what they could do with it. (Keep pens in it, plant a flower in it or keep your stress-candy hidden inside.) I suddenly felt like I was being rude to refuse and almost took the gift. I stayed strong and let it pass by.

I'll continue my quest to try out new plant-

based products and practices and share them. I hope you'll do the same.

Susan E. Yoder is executive director of Seed Your Future, a non-profit movement to promote horticulture and inspire more people to pursue careers working with plants. Reach her at syoder@SeedYourFuture.org.

Share Our Work With Supporters

The Association Outreach Committee (AOC) has developed an online form that helps GardenComm members enter information that can be shared with sponsors, exhibitors and other supporters. The hope is that this will help supporters when they ask what are they getting for their effort.

"Help GardenComm spread the word to our wonderful sponsors and vendors about the wonderful work you do," said **Angela Treadwell Palmer**, co-chair of the AOC.

"We have created a [Google Form](#) that is so easy to fill out. It asks simple questions about any products you write or talk about. This way, we can share these metrics with our vendors to prove they are getting an ROI (return on investment) when they exhibit at our Annual Symposium & Expo, sponsor our events or send out samples to our members. The more we can share how we have communicated to our audiences about their products, the better," she said.



PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF IT

Please make a note of the Google Form and remember to jot down the info requested. GardenComm and AOC have made it as possible for you to do this. If we make the effort, we all benefit.

The committee will collect the information on a regular basis—perhaps quarterly—and share it with the supporters and others to demonstrate what GardenComm members do to promote their products, services and other information.

Membership Survey Report

As many of you know, we sent out a member survey in October asking which GardenComm benefits are most useful to you and what future benefits you might like to see added to your membership package. The reason behind this survey was to learn how GardenComm could better serve its members—something we hoped would help us navigate the future in this uncertain time.

In an effort to improve the financial health of our organization, we had considered offering tiered membership choices, which would have kept our current membership package in place, while offering some members the opportunity to pay more for additional professional services. It was clear from the survey that there is not sufficient interest in this to institute the change. Unfortunately, because so few people responded (approximately 20%), the survey was not as helpful as we had hoped.

DEFINING OURSELVES

We also wanted to better understand how the membership defines itself: As professional garden communicators or as people who love gardens but don't necessarily want to make a living communicating about them. Although these groups often overlap, each requires different services. If either one of these perspectives had been in the majority, it would have indicated how to proceed, not only about tiered membership, but also in focusing our organization as it moves forward. While it is clear that tiered membership will not benefit GardenComm at this time, we cannot say whether this is because the response rate to the survey was so low that it didn't deliver solid data, or because our members are so equally distributed between these two camps.

The survey showed that our members are basically satisfied with the organization as is; yet in order to flourish, GardenComm must change. The internet has altered the world of communication. Not only are there fewer professional outlets for our skills, the general public is less interested in paying for professional communication. But at the same time, many new opportunities are open to us. Self-publishing gets easier and more affordable every day. Podcasting is booming. And online learning offers a wide range of opportunities to people with expertise and the desire to teach.

Which leaves us asking ourselves once again: Who are we, how can we best serve our members, and how we can interest others in joining our organization? Are we a professional organization with a professional requirement for membership, or are we a group of enthusiastic amateurs with a passion for plants and gardening? Those are both wonderful things, but the two groups cannot be served in the same way. And so our dilemma continues.

YOU CAN HELP

We are telling you this to be transparent and because we know that you value your membership in GardenComm, yet may not be aware of how all membership organizations are currently struggling and how crucial member participation is to our future.

If GardenComm is important to you, it is up to you to get involved. Volunteer your time when you're asked to judge the Media Awards, even if you'd rather enter to win a prize. Respond to a survey when it lands in your email inbox, even if you're busy that day. And think about why you joined this organization in the first place. If we can do something to serve you better, let us know. And then be prepared to help make that happen, because without volunteer members, we are nothing.

Submitted by the Tiered Membership Task Force: Diane Blazek, Ellen Zachos, Andrea Whitely, Chris Sabbarese



GardenComm Media Awards: Time to enter your best work

The 2021 GardenComm Media Awards promise to be more exciting than ever. We've added categories, expanded our rules and made it less expensive to submit your best work.

The GardenComm Media Awards are the only national awards program in garden communications. With more than 50 categories in writing, photography, digital and broadcast media, publishing, live speaking and more, the awards offer multiple opportunities to share our work with colleagues and friends. It's a wonderful way to keep in touch with the garden communicator community.

Submissions are open to members and non-members. GardenComm offers a discount to communicators who enter three

or more submissions. Submit more than two entries and receive \$10 off for each additional submission. (Discount applies to members and non-members; remember that members already get a discount.)

Four new categories from 2020 will continue in 2021: Writing/Marketing, Writing/Trade Column, Writing/Trade Article and Photography/Blogging. And here's a pandemic special for you: If you've recorded a stellar Zoom presentation this year, you can submit that in the Live Presentations/Speaking category, as long as you also appear on screen.

Awards are given at two levels. Silver Awards of Achievement will be announced on June 30 and Gold Awards for Best Talent or Best Product will be announced during GardenComm's Annual Awards & Honors Ceremony in late summer. All entries must have initially been published and/or copyrighted between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020, and must be received no later than March 30, 2021. No late entries will be accepted.

If you're interested in volunteering as a judge, please contact awards co-chairs **Carol Michel** or **Ellen Zachos**. And if you've won a

Gold Award in the past year or two, we hope you'll consider giving back some of your time as a judge. (You can always enter again next year.)

The Media Awards are open now! [Click for full instructions and how to enter.](#)

Big News about GardenComm Media Awards

Believe it or not, there's a silver lining to all those Zoom presentations we've been doing. This year, in the GardenComm Media Awards Live Presentation category, you may submit a recording of your most excellent Zoom recordings (or videos made via GoToWebinar, GoogleMeet or similar program, as long as you are visible within the recording. You must appear within the presentation—full screen, as a thumbnail or a combination of both. You may not submit a slideshow, which you narrate but in which you are not visible.

Why not submit that recording and get the recognition you deserve?

New GardenComm Members

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Thanks to these GardenComm members for helping to grow the organization in 2020. For every new member you bring in going forward, you'll save \$20 on your 2022 membership dues.

ONE MEMBER

Kary Arimoto-Mercer
Steven Biggs
Diane Blazek
Kirk Ryan Brown
Natalie Carmoli
Stephanie Cohen
Carmen DeVito

Helen Newling Lawson

Eva Monheim
Susan Morrison
Kim Roman
Erin Schanen
Bobbie Schwartz
Lawrence Sherk
Thanksgiving Point
David Ward
Marianne Wilburn

TWO MEMBERS

Joan Bolton
Marie Butler
Monica Hemingway
Grace Hensley
Kathy Jentz
Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp

THREE MEMBERS

C.L. Fornari