

GARDENCOMM
Garden Communicators International



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

GardenComm Virtual Conference Summer 2021

BY KIM TOSCANO



This time last year, I was looking forward to visiting Williamsburg, touring historic gardens and meeting our keynote speaker, Shaun Spencer-Hester. Fast forward a year and I'm once again getting excited as planning is underway for GardenComm Virtual Conference Summer 2021: Garden Communications in Changing Times. While we will be meeting virtually again this year, the Conference Committee is hard at work planning an exciting program packed with education, new products, social events and plenty of networking (you spoke—we listened!). They are also finalizing details for Shaun Spencer-Hester to deliver the keynote address.

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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.

GardenComm Presents: Meet the Author



The Education Committee is excited to introduce a new event to our on-line programming. Join us 6 to 7 p.m. (EDT), Wednesday April 14, for our first Meet the Author event, featuring GardenComm members **Niki Jabbour** and **Jessica Walliser** of Savvy Gardening. They will discuss their new books, Jessica's *Plant Partners: Science-Based Companion Planting Strategies for the Vegetable Garden* and Niki's *Growing Under Cover: Techniques for a More Productive, Weather-Resistant, Pest-Free Vegetable Garden*.



Meet the Author offers a platform to learn from our peers. Curious about the publishing process? Ask Niki and Jessica about their experiences writing, publishing and marketing their new books. We encourage registrants to send in their questions for Niki and Jessica prior to the event so we can work these into the discussion. We will also reserve time in the program to answer audience questions.

In addition to peer-to-peer learning, the Education Committee hopes to facilitate collaboration through this new program. Meet the Author events provide an opportunity to learn about your fellow GardenComm member's work. Perhaps they'd make a great guest on your podcast or a partner for your latest project.

Want to have your work featured on Meet the Author? Contact **Kim Toscano**, Education Committee Co-Chair at kimtoscnoholmes@gmail.com.



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PUBLISHER

GardenComm

355 Lexington Ave., 15th Floor • New York, NY 10017
212-297-2198 info@gardencomm.org

EDITORIAL

Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp, Editor
jemsharp@sbcglobal.net

Cathy Wilkinson Barash, Copy Editor
thebloominggourmet@gmail.com

Paul Wilson, Graphic Designer
paul@paulwilsondesign.com

ADVERTISING/CIRCULATION

info@gardencomm.org

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DIRECTORS

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

REGION 1

Sally Cunningham (2022 N)

Writer, Tour Director, Educator

Charlie Nardozzi (2021 R)

Gardening with Charlie Nardozzi

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REGION 2

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Cottage in the Court

Kim Roman (2022 R)

Square Foot Gardening 4U

REGION 3

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All-America Selections/

National Garden Bureau

Alicia Rittenhouse (2021 R)

HyR BRIX Fertilizer

Pam Bennett (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)

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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

Spring is in the Air



When Gustav Mahler, an Austro-Bohemian Romantic composer—and one of the leading conductors of his generation—said, “Spring won’t let me stay in this house any longer! I must get out and breathe the air deeply again,” I’m sure he had no idea what we would be going through a century later, and how true this would be.

This year, more than ever, the sights, sounds and smells of spring are not just inspiring but energizing and necessary for our health and well-being.

Even though the vaccinations are just rolling out, I am hopeful we will see a tangible impact on our daily social, educational and professional lives very soon. I’m likening those advancements to the spring sunshine with light at the end of the tunnel and I am soaking it all in.

GardenComm leaders are also using that spring momentum. The Education Committee continues exciting programs in April and May, starting with a new format called “Meet the Author” on April 14 with [Niki Jabbour](#), *The Weekend Gardener* on News Talk Radio 95.7, and [Jessica Walliser](#), horticulturist, author and dedicated bug lover. On April 22, author and writing coach [Mary-Kate Mackey](#) will discuss the techniques needed to be a compassionate, strategic, and efficient interviewer. Cruise into May with a third hydrangea session with [C.L. Fornari](#) (buy all three) and on May 19, learn about “Rain Gardens for Garden Communicators” with [Judy Nauseef](#). It will be a spring to learn and grow.

VOLUNTEER WITH US

With spring in the air and growth all around, it is important to note that GardenComm has a small and mighty staff, but the organization is volunteer driven. Don’t miss a chance to skip into spring by taking on a critically needed volunteer role: Grow your network, your skills and help GardenComm thrive. If you have business-minded traits, such as being goal-oriented, budget-conscious, open-minded and resourceful, we would love your help on one of these revenue-driving committees. If you are interested, please email info@gardencomm.org.

- **Revenue Task Force** - The goal is to review a list of revenue opportunities, determine priorities and assign realistic goals and strategies for execution. The recommendations will be shared with the Board of Directors.
- **Sponsorship** - The committee is primarily responsible for establishing and securing sponsors for the Annual Conference, virtual programs and other educational programs and activities as well as annual sponsorships. They may also assist with the recruitment of Allied Trade members and the creation of potential opportunities to partner with other organizations.
- **2021 Virtual Conference** - The Conference Committee, along with staff, will organize GardenComm volunteers to coordinate all non-educational aspects of the annual event that promotes the garden communicators’ profession and enriches networking experiences for attendees. Like all the conferences, this year’s virtual experience will promote garden communicator awareness, increase individual knowledge and enhance professional skills.

We are also anticipating another wonderful virtual conference this summer taking place August 11-14. Read through this *On the QT* issue to learn more and keep an eye out for additional info to come.

In the meantime, we want to know what this spring and getting outdoors means to you while we help increase your visibility by featuring your content on GardenComm’s Instagram account. Just send us a DM with a hi-res photo of your garden or any you have visited (safely, of course) or other spring moments you capture. Please include a brief description and garden tip along with your Instagram handle so we can give you credit.

Stay well, get outdoors and welcome spring with open arms like I am going to do.

All the best,

Marla Schrager

mschrager@kellencompany.com



Shaun Spencer-Hester

ABOUT OUR KEYNOTE

Shaun Spencer-Hester serves as executive director at the Anne Spencer Memorial Foundation Inc. and the Anne Spencer House and Garden Museum Inc. in Lynchburg, Virginia. The Anne Spencer Garden is the only known restored garden of an African-American in the United States. Inside and out, the museum preserves the memory of Spencer-Hester's grandmother, Anne—a poet, gardener, teacher and civil rights activist.

A long-time interior designer, Shaun Spencer-Hester puts her skills to use inside the museum walls, where she currently leads ongoing restoration and preservation. Spencer-Hester staged the interior of the museum and cottage to create the feeling that her grandparents have stepped out for the day and are expected to return at any moment. She's also involved in the museum's day-to-day operations, serving as tour guide, grant writer, chief window washer and sometimes landscaper—trimming hedges and mowing grass at her ancestor's property.

This isn't Spencer-Hester's first historical renovation. Throughout her career, she assisted other designers and architects on residential and commercial projects, including Blair House, the President's Guest House, and several other historic properties in the area.

Raised among a family of artistic and literary thinkers, Shaun Spencer-Hester is likewise a creative. She is working on a manuscript that tells her family's history. The book documents her family's service to country and community during times when freedom came at a price.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE JO ELLEN MEYERS SHARP

Changing Times



A year ago, few of us anticipated the broad, dramatic changing struggles of 2020, struggles that threatened our very lives. And as COVID-19 has resulted in loss of income and travel restrictions, it has also heavily impacted GardenComm's survival as an organization.

Our struggles as an organization began mounting several years ago as membership declined. Aging out and transformational changes in all media were already pressuring us financially and the situation has not improved.

The Finance Committee—made up of the EXCOM and two at-large members (**Carol Michel** and **Ellen Zachos**)—has spent the last several months examining GardenComm's financial fragility, memberships, sponsorships, supporters and our conference.

Among the things we've changed:

- We have a new investment manager. We left Wells Fargo and are now with Raymond James.
- We've discontinued the free access to an attorney for members. We paid \$18,000 (\$90,000) as a retainer for the attorney and 28 members used it over the past five years, amounting to a \$3,214 benefit for those members. We are working to develop an alternative for this.
- We're grateful for all the members who have stepped up in various ways...virtual Regional Meetings, participating in committees and conducting webinars.

Meantime, it's important that we keep in mind that our organization has helped so many of us develop our careers. Please contact us at info@gardencomm.org

All the best,

Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp
jemsharp46@gmail.com

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

Soil, Carbon and Climate Change: A Primer



We have faced the specter of climate change for years. My first true awareness of it began in the early '90s. Like others I have built my knowledge around the core idea: Our planet, our home—

is warming, and we need to fix this threat to our existence.

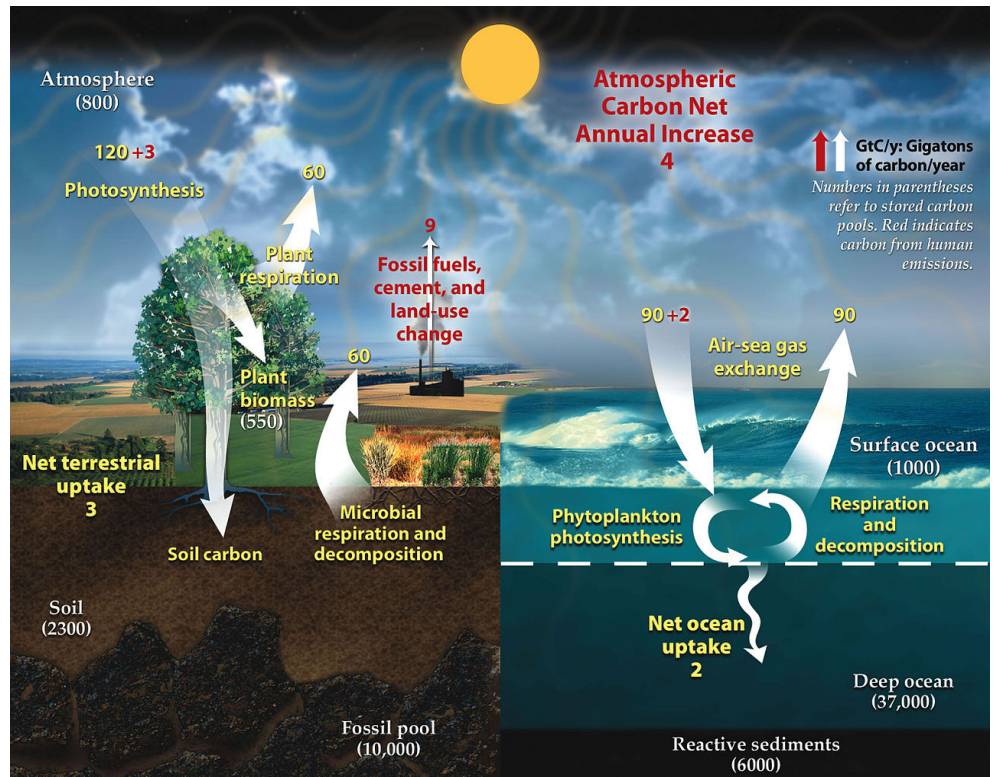
Climate change is complex with many interlocking parts, but the focus here is on soil, a powerful tool in the race to slow the climate-change train. The information presented here is based on a class taught by Rattan Lal, professor of soil science at Ohio State University. Lal has devoted his life to the study of soil and sustainable soil practices. He was awarded the 2019 Japan Prize and the 2020 World Food Prize for “developing and mainstreaming a soil-centric approach to increasing food production that restores and conserves natural resources and mitigates climate change.”

THE CARBON CYCLE IN BRIEF

Simply put, the carbon cycle is the constant flow of carbon—organic and inorganic—through Earth's biosphere. There are four major carbon sinks (or storage): Atmosphere, oceans, soil and plants. The rate of exchange and the length of time a system stores carbon define the difference between short- and long-term carbon cycles.

The short-term carbon cycle is based on the gigatons of carbon exchanged over decades and has been called the fast cycle. Plants, the atmosphere, surface soil and upper- to mid-ocean systems are considered to be part of the short-term cycle.

The long-term cycle evolves over a multi-million-year scale. Here, carbon is sequestered in deep land and ocean systems, which serve as permanent reservoirs for trapping carbon that, if released, would throw the short-term carbon cycle out of balance. In the carbon cycle graphic these permanent reservoirs are in the deep, dark recesses of Earth and contain carbon from the time of the dinosaurs and earlier. We call these fossil fuels and have been consuming them at an accelerating rate since the Industrial Revolution.

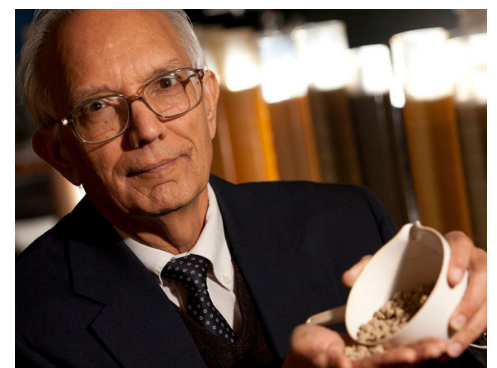


This diagram of the [fast carbon cycle](#) shows the movement of carbon between land, atmosphere and oceans. Yellow numbers are natural fluxes and red are human contributions in gigatons of carbon per year. White numbers indicate stored carbon.

GARDEN COMMUNICATORS' ROLE WITH SOIL

Soil is a carbon sink and we need to protect it. Soil is the biosphere's foundation—the keeper and disperser of minerals and organic compounds that support life on Earth. In the short term, surface soil sequesters carbon by absorbing decaying organic matter and by serving as a home for the organisms that decompose this organic matter. Soil also anchors and supplies nutrients to plants, which comprise another important short-term carbon sink. When we lose soil to erosion or degrade soil by compacting it or adding materials that reduce its fitness, we lose this essential ecosystem service.

It is only in the short term that we as individuals can protect soil's carbon sequestration function since long-term soil processes are beyond our lifespan. Therefore, as garden communicators, it is our job to convey the



Dr. Lal is in the forefront of developing sustainable food systems for diverse climates.

steps that any person can take to protect the soil. Our audiences are looking for guidelines on how to garden better. Here are some recommendations that will inform and empower them in their desire to be stewards of the Earth.

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- Cover the ground. Bare soil is subject to wind and water erosion. For annual vegetable gardens, seed cover crops or cover with organic mulches, such as shredded leaves, mushroom compost or straw, in mid- to late fall. Caveat: Straw can be a weed seed bank.
- Leave garden residues in the garden as long as they are disease and pest-free. In-place composting mimics the natural processes of a forest, prairie, wetland and other areas.
- Plant deep-rooted species that hold the soil and contribute organic matter when old roots die.
- Replace all or portions of your lawn with prairie or grassland species. It may seem counterintuitive but per acre, grassland sequesters more carbon than forest.
- Plant trees. It takes time for trees to mature and sequester carbon, but it is important to create biodiverse ecosystems. Biodiversity on top of the ground promotes biodiversity below the ground, which improves tilth and soil health.
- Healthy soil sequesters more carbon. Do not use synthetic fertilizers, which are based on salts and petrochemicals and degrade soil life. Understand the effect of using pesticides and herbicides—even organic ones—on the soil community.

This is what could be called working from the bottom up when you garden. Dr. Lal has expressed this basic truth in class and in his many talks and articles: "Soil health, human health and environmental health are indivisible."



RESOURCES;

[Rattan Lal: The solutions underfoot - The power of soil](#)

[Fact Sheet: Soils help to combat and adapt to climate change by playing a key role in the carbon cycle](#)

[General Technical Report WO-95: Considering Forest and Grassland Carbon in Land Management](#)

Debra Knapke is co-chair of GardenComm's Sustainability Committee. She is a teacher, lecturer, garden designer, photographer and an eco-conscious gardener and worker of the land and is not reluctant to discuss how gardeners can access the wisdom of nature on a daily basis. She is the co-author of five books and is a blogger at [heartlandgardening](#).

IN MEMORIAM

Russell Loy Studebaker

July 7, 1938 - December 20, 2020



Russell with his favorite chicken, Miss Fluffy.

Russell Studebaker, horticulturalist, author, GardenComm member and gentleman scoundrel, died December 20, 2020 at the age of 82.

It is difficult to adequately express Russell's impact on the world of horticulture, or the world itself. After graduating from Texas Tech College with a degree in horticulture, he served in the Peace Corps under Sargent Shriver, where he began his habit of inspiring others. After Russell's death, Rolando Barillas shared this on social media: "Russell served as a Peace Corps volunteer in my native town of San Pedro Nonualco, El Salvador, in 1962-64, when I was a kid. He was a model for me and inspired me to become an agronomist. He visited our country twice later when I became a Peace Corps staff. He and I developed a great friendship."

TULSA HORTICULTURIST

In Tulsa, Oklahoma, Russell served for three decades as a horticulturist for the city's Parks and Recreation Department, where he worked tirelessly to further the city's beautification efforts. He created an expectation of excellence that still lives on in Tulsa's parks.

He was passionate about wildlife and wild plants and was a founding member of the Oklahoma Native Plant Society. At Tulsa Garden Club meetings and Oklahoma Horticulture meetings—well, pretty much any meeting he went to—he was a rock star and would have groups of people wanting to hear his pearls of wisdom. He joined GWAA (now GardenComm) in 1987 and came to many Annual Symposia over the years.

Many of these pearls of wisdom were shared over the 33 years he wrote his "In Tulsa Gardens" column for the *Tulsa World* newspaper, where his Hemmingwayesque photo would gaze above the fold on the Living Section every week.

READERS AND FANS LOVED HIM

After his death, there were so many wonderful tributes posted on social media. Some of the best mentions: "World Famous Horticulturalist," "delight," "mentor," "hoot," "raconteur with few equals," "chicken whisperer," "plantsman," "opinionated in the extreme," "influence," "one of a kind," and my favorite from Marilyn Stewart, "He did not suffer fools gladly and my sympathies are with anyone who never knew him."

He was a household name in my hometown of Tulsa and getting to know him as an adult, spending time with him and hanging out was special for me. He was a fascinating character who could equally irritate or charm. As fellow Southerner Felder Rushing put it, "Either you got him or you didn't." Those who got him got to enjoy a gem of a human and a horticultural giant. Rest in peace my friend, you made the world a more beautiful, and definitely more interesting, place.

He is survived by his brother, Bill Studebaker; niece, Susan Rush; great nieces and nephews, Branton T. Rush (Melissa), Stephanie Henson (Aaron) and Russell R. Rush (Kendra); great-great nieces and nephews, Andrea Rush, Blayton Rush, Rylie Rush, Kelcie Rush, Hattie Henson and Atlee Henson; and a host of friends and GardenComm colleagues.

—Kevin Gragg, former GardenComm member and Region 5 Regional Director

The Flora Journalist: Elisabetta Sari



Journalist and landscape architect Elisabetta Sari speaks four languages fluently. Like Elisabetta, my first language was Italian, but thankfully we agreed on English for our interview.

We spoke in early December, as Italy was experiencing a second wave of COVID-19 infections and Elisabetta had set up camp at her home in the rural village of Pordenone. This medieval town is about an hour north of Venice (where the word quarantine originates) and sits on the River Noncello, once the main artery for travel and trade with the port of Venice.

A native of the area, Elisabetta has spent most of her life living in the region. As a child she dreamt of becoming an archeologist and told me that the connection with the land, discovery and curiosity have always been a part of her. "Growing up in the countryside, my memories are tied to streams and hedgerows where, as children, we hid and [built] wood huts and treehouses. I loved to isolate myself and create imaginary stories."

A EUROPEAN APPROACH

Elisabetta was also strongly influenced by her mother's passion for flowers and gardens, along with her strong aesthetic sense. "She loved to pick flowers from the garden and arrange them in pots with great care, composing them as perfect still lifes."

Elisabetta went to Germany to specialize in landscape architecture, as there were no such programs in Italy at that time. In fact, there is still some confusion in Italy today about what exactly a landscape architect does, so Elisabetta takes a more European approach, writing and working for publications in France, Holland and Germany.

BLOGS BEYOND BORDERS

Borne out of her desire to create an "editorial space that would bring together design, art, travel and events along a botanical theme," Elisabetta began her blog, *The Flora Journal*. "My fervent curiosity has allowed me to write



Picture credit: ©Elisabetta Sari

Weijers Nursery

and report on a platform that was not relegated to one country but went beyond borders."

She believes that Italians have forgotten their nation's rich history of garden design, with dozens of celebrated examples still dotting the country from Tuscany to Sicily. "In Italy now, there is no great culture about gardens and horticulture and very few garden programs on TV. The public does not seem to want to experiment with new solutions or new types of plants."

EXPANDS REPERTOIRE

This attitude has encouraged Elisabetta to broaden her professional repertoire to include Horticultural Show Judge and Garden Festival Exhibit Creator. Her standards for great shows have always been the Chaumont sur Loire Garden Festival in France and the U.K.'s Chelsea Flower Show, but she also notes several



– Continues on page 7



Picture credit: ©Elisabetta Sari

Cut dahlias at the Holland Dahlia Event at the Keukenhof Castle

up-and-comers. "I will be part of the press jury of the Cote d'Azur Gardens Festival in France and hope to visit Metis/Reford in Canada in the future. Garden festivals are an interesting laboratory of innovative ideas for both the designers who participate and the public and professionals who attend them."

To genuinely appreciate gardens, Elisabetta believes one must have a strong knowledge of garden history and for that, visiting historical gardens is essential. "I always recommend

(viewing) the genius of Andre le Notre at Versailles and Vaux-le-Vicomte as well as Italian Renaissance gardens such as the Villa D'Este in Tivoli."

Elisabetta describes her own work as using the strong forms of the formal garden to create a clear structure within a garden and then integrating softer elements that help create a more natural environment. A case in point is the charming exhibit she designed for a garden festival in Ireland, which she titled *O Sole Mio*, after the famous Italian song. "The theme of the festival was 'roots.' A vibrant symbol of the land of sun, serenity and joy, the song is deeply rooted in the heart of every Italian and it is celebrated in an ironic way in the garden space."

APPRECIATES GARDENCOMM'S FOCUS

Her multi-national approach and desire to grow and connect professionally inspired her to join GardenComm in 2012. "Since in Italy we don't have a specialized association for garden journalists, I discovered GardenComm. The organization is always active and even as a distant member I have always appreciated the newsletters full of comments and suggestions. I have dreamed of participating at the National Conference at least once in my life."

Elisabetta writes for numerous gardening and trade magazines such as *Acer*, *Markt in GRN* and *Il Floricoltore and Gardenia*. In 2019 she became Italy's brand ambassador for an online professional plant supplier, the Dutch-based Plant Market BV. You can read her blog, [The Flora Journal](#), and also follow and connect with her on [her website](#). 🌿

ELISABETTA SARI'S FAST FIVE QUESTIONS:

- 1. Least favorite garden task?** Weeding
- 2. Biggest garden mistake/ fail you ever made.** Using too many ground cover plants that have become huge like *Hypericum calycinum* (St. John's wort or Aaron's beard)
- 3. What celebrity/ famous person would you like to design a garden for?** Madonna
- 4. Which dead botanist/ horticulturist/ nurseryman would you like to have a drink/dinner with?** Vita Sackville-West
- 5. What plant should be banished to the compost heap of history?** *Robinia pseudoacacia* (Black locust is invasive in Europe)

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](#).

Upcoming GardenComm EVENTS

Webinars

Thursday, April 22

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET

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

Thursday, May 6

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET

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

Wednesday, May 19

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET

The Whys and Hows of Rain Garden Design with Judy Nauseef



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.

Expand Your Horizons



I frequently describe my existence as a mosaic, a whole made up of little pieces. 2020 prompted me to add more chips. You, too, probably.

Last spring, I bought a bunch of paper pots (12 inches wide and 6 inches deep) from a landscape supplier and filled them potting mix and planted spring greens, herbs, nasturtiums, violas or pansies.

In my website store, I sold them for \$29.95, including delivery. I sold 30 of them and made nearly \$900. Expenses were \$100, so my profit was \$800. It was an easy sell, marketed in April and well received by the recipients, including reorders for friends and family

I promoted by container planting biz in [my free, award-winning monthly newsletter](#) and picked up clients for that. I promoted my garden coaching biz and picked up several more clients. In fact, the garden coaching biz was active all summer and into fall. And it's already started up this spring.

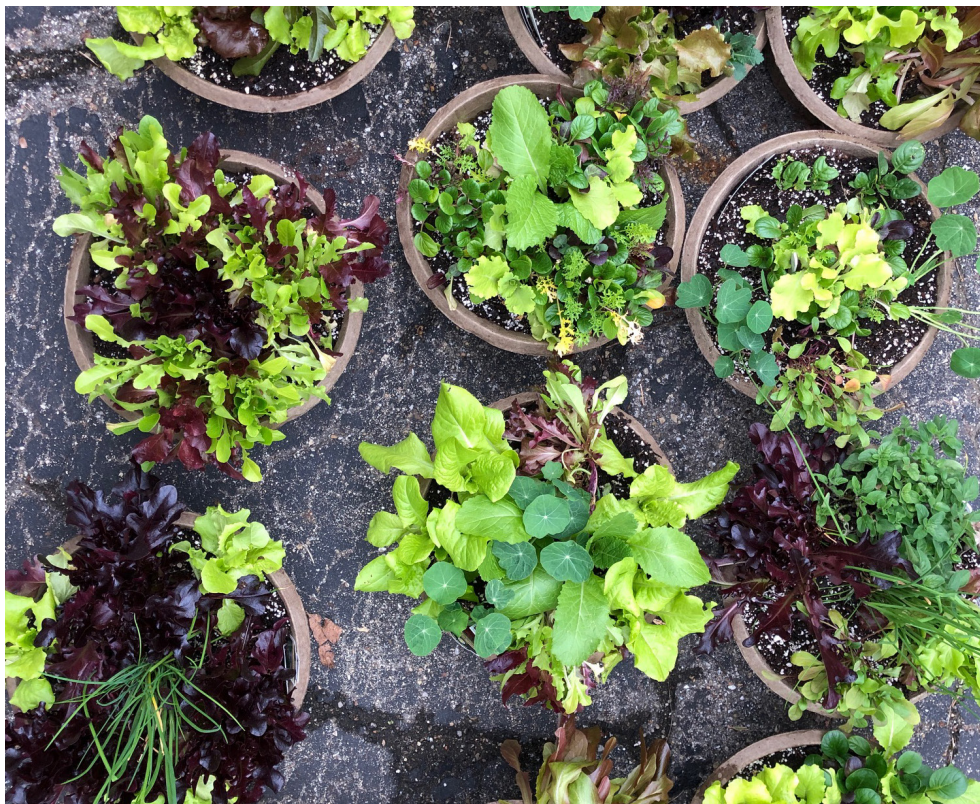
CHALLENGING JOB

For containers, I picked up the 80-some pots at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. My job is to order the plants and plant them and then it is the fairgrounds job to water them. This was a challenging job, not only because of the number and size of the containers, but where they were located. Containers I thought would be in the shade ended up being in the sun because the fairgrounds were closed and the folks moved everything to one, blaringly hot, sunny space.

We also could not get the containers watered. My crew went several days with buckets and jugs to water the containers, carting water from spigots. We ended up replacing plants in some of the pots and finally got the fairgrounds maintenance crew to water them. It was extremely frustrating, though, watching plants wither and die.

EXTRA EFFORT PAID OFF

I figured the job would be lost this year because there have been few activities at the fairgrounds, resulting in reduced revenue, plus there was the watering issue. Surprisingly, the powers that be want to move ahead



Paper containers planted with lettuces and other spring greens sold well.

with plantings this summer. What's rewarding about this job is that I can hire four people and spread the wealth. The fairgrounds folks expressed appreciation for our work in trying to keep the plants alive so it looks like our dedication paid off.

MORE DROP-IN POTS SOLD

This winter, I repeated the success with winter drop-in containers. I potted up about 30 paper containers with winter greenery I had left over from my regular customers' jobs. I sold 30 of these for \$24.95, delivered. I tucked in pinecones for seasonal color (aside from the greens—people forget green is a color). I didn't figure the expenses on that, but I grossed almost \$750, which was helpful during the holidays. The expenses were nominal since I'd already recovered the cost of the greens with other clients. This experiment was very easy.

At the same time, I promoted gift certificates for container plantings and garden coaching sessions for holiday gift giving; I

did reasonably well with that, too. Again, it provided income when badly needed. I'll start garden coaching with the new clients in April. Most of the container gift certificates will be for summer plantings.

ADAPTABILITY

Like a lot of you, speaking engagements remain virtual, so I added virtual to my listing of talks on my website, and it's already there on Great Garden Speakers,

I picked up a couple of blogs and content-providing gigs, but these are not regular and consistent. Still, it's money coming in the door.

We've all had to adapt, change and remake ourselves and our businesses. These lessons will carry us through. And what didn't kill us made us stronger.

Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp is President of GardenComm. She blogs at hoosiergardener.com.

Welcome

New GardenComm Members

Helping **US**
GROW!

Robin Avni • (206) 795-9311
robin@bloomimprint.com
Gig Harbor, WA

Cameron Bonsey
cameronb@coastofmaine.com
Portland, MA

Basil Camu • (919) 787-9551
basil.camu@leaflimb.com
Raleigh, NC

David Clark • (716) 997-4363
david3777@aol.com
Hamburg, NY

John DeVore • (513) 560-9078
john@devoreslandandwater.com
Pine Ridge, FL

Liz Fulghum • (615) 681-3364
lizfulghum@gmail.com
Whites Creek, TN

Cindy Funes • (206) 953-4659
info@gardenrevelry.com
Seattle, WA

James Grey • (845) 464-1747
rtpmoney@aol.com
Poughkeepsie, NY

*** Kristen Guiles** • (616) 648-2195
cultivatevariety@gmail.com
Belgrade, MT

Wendy Hanzel • (330) 745-2143
wendy.hanzel@arishort.com
Barberton, OH

Heather Jacobs
thefancygarden@gmail.com
Apple Valley, CA

**** Johnny Appleseed
Orchards, LLC** • (904) 765-0727
jay@johnnyappleseed.com
Folkston, GA

*** Fallon Kipp** • (925) 698-6724
Fallon@gardenshf.org
Walnut Creek, CA

Michael Krebill • (319) 524-4576
mikekrebill@aol.com
Keokuk, IA

*** Emmy Lambert** • (718) 644-3525
emmyclambert@gmail.com
Larchmont, NY

Judson LeCompte • (616) 846-4729
judson@springmeadownursery.com
Grand Haven, MI

Kerry O'Connell • (406) 930-2849
kerry@negligentgardener.com
Manhattan, MT

Dennis Peck • (971) 226-3072
dpeckjune11@gmail.com
Beaverton, OR

Alyse Piburn • (970) 485-0339
alyse@mountain-roots.com
Frisco, CO

Sid Raisch • (937) 302-0423
sidraisch@hotmail.com
Hillsboro, OH

Valerie Smith • (843) 901-0827
valerie@sodolutions.com
Mount Pleasant, SC

Kari Spencer • (602) 418-0435
themicrofarmproject@gmail.com
Phoenix, AZ

Anita White • (360) 224-8618
anita@white-ink.net
Snohomish, WA

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

ONE MEMBER

Marie Butler
Natalie Carmolli
Sally Cunningham
Katie Elzer-Peters
Janet Endsley
Garden Center Magazine
Grace Hensley
Chris Kelleher
Paul Kelly (St. Lynn's Press)
Cherie Tripp LeJeune
Vanessa Gardner Nagel
Bobbie Schwartz
Maria Zampini

PW PROVEN WINNERS
COLDEN CHOICE FLOWERING TREES

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ZINFIN DOLL® panicle hydrangea

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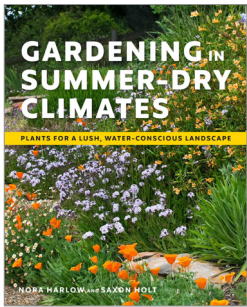
NORA HARLOW AND SAXON HOLT

Gardening in Summer-Dry Climates: Plants for a Lush, Water-Conscious Landscape

Timber Press

308 pages, paperback, \$29.95

Published January 5



Gardening in an area defined by arid summers and soggy winters can be challenging. But gardens can thrive in such conditions, and this definitive handbook shares the plants and prac-

tices that will help them succeed. Landscape architect Nora Harlow and award-winning photographer **Saxon Holt** explain how plants adapt to these harsh conditions and how topography relates to climate.

At its core, *Gardening in Summer-Dry Climates* encourages gardeners to understand and work in harmony with their region. By choosing naturally occurring, climate-appropriate plants, gardeners can promote healthier ecosystems and make a difference from their own backyards. Working with rather than against the summer-dry climate means reducing impact on water supplies and creating spaces that attract and sustain wildlife. It means taking a step back, letting nature assert itself in the garden, and welcoming in the unique wildness of these special regions.

A comprehensive plant directory provides details on each plant's needs, and stunning photography shows how smart design can help address seasonal issues. It's everything a reader needs to create a flourishing summer-dry garden.

JENNIFER JEWELL

Under Western Skies: Visionary Gardens from the Rockies to the Pacific Coast

Timber Press

412 pages, hardcover, \$50

To be published April 27



From windswept deserts to misty seaside hills and verdant valleys, the natural landscapes of the American West offer an astounding variety of climates for gardens. *Under Western Skies* reveals 36 of the most innovative designs—all embracing and celebrating the very soul of the land on which they grow.

For the gardeners featured here, nature is the ultimate inspiration rather than something to be dominated, and *Under Western Skies* shows the strong connection each garden has with its place. Packed with Caitlin Atkinson's stunning photographs and illuminated by **Jennifer Jewell's** deep interest in the relationships between people and the spaces they inhabit, *Under Western Skies* offers page after page of encouraging ingenuity and inventive design for passionate gardeners who call the West home.

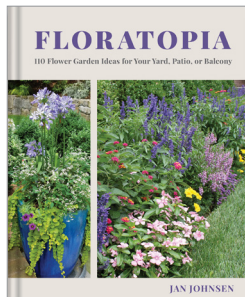
JAN JOHNSEN

Floratopia: 110 Flower Garden Ideas for Your Yard, Patio, or Balcony

Countryman Press

256 pages, hardback, \$30

Published February 16



potential for colorful flowers, both annual and perennial, in all kinds of outdoor spaces, large or small. Lush photos and informative captions accompany essential advice such as "Hot Weather Flower Garden Tips," "Tiny Space, Tiny Garden," and "Tips for Layering with Flowers." Selected growing tips, such as "Become a Rake Master" and "Should I Cut Back in Winter?" answer common questions and ensure success for gardeners of all skill levels.

Floratopia both inspires and enlightens; it underscores the role of flowers as pollinator magnets and encourages the appreciation of flowers throughout their entire lifecycle. Choice tips for butterfly gardens, combining grasses and flowers as well as deer-resistant combina-

tions also include recommended cultivars and suggested soil conditions. It is divided into six chapters: "Flowers in Pots and Planters," "Flower Garden Planting Tips," "Flower Garden Design Tips and Green Thoughts," "Themes for Flower Gardens," "A Few Choice Perennial Flowers to Try" and "A Selection of Favorite Annual Flowers."

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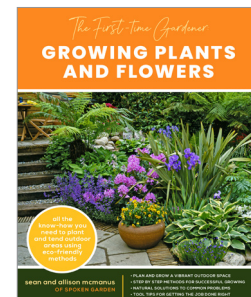
SEAN AND ALLISON MCMANUS

The First-Time Gardener: Growing Plants and Flowers: All the know-how you need to plant and tend outdoor areas using eco-friendly methods

Cool Springs Press

176 pages, paperback \$26.99

Published March 9



In *The First-Time Gardener's Guide to Growing Plants and Flowers*, **Sean and Allison McManus** answer all of your questions—and more. They are the gardening pros behind the pop-

ular website, YouTube channel and podcast, *Spoken Garden*. They present an easy-to-follow beginner's gardening guide, drawing on their experiences and education in landscape maintenance, plant and flower growing, environmental horticulture and teaching science.

New and aspiring gardeners will learn tips for selecting the best plants and flowers for their growing conditions; best planting techniques for different types of plant; how to mulch trees, shrubs and garden beds correctly; pruning dos and don'ts for common garden plants—and so much more. Plus, gardeners will learn insider tips on everything from the difference between annuals and perennials to choosing the best organic fertilizer. Through their simple steps, photo tutorials, charts and more, Sean and Allison guide the new gardener on a journey to becoming a better, more confident, lifelong gardener.

THOMAS J. MICKEY

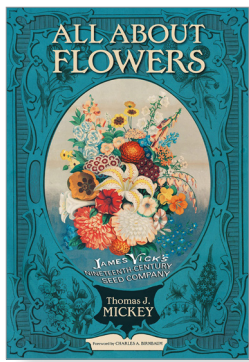
All About Flowers: James Vick's Nineteenth-Century Seed Company

Swallow Press

204 pages, paperback, \$26.95

To be published April 30

Rochester, New York, seed company owner James Vick (1818-1882) played a key role in



gardens everywhere in 19th century America, whether those of the wealthy, middle class, working class, or city dweller.

Thomas Mickey explores how Vick inspired gardeners with his own passion for gardening

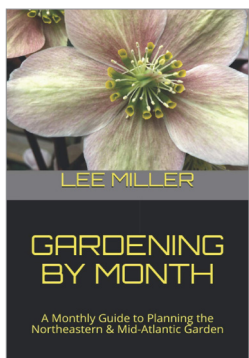
with flowers and his desire to spread the love of floriculture. The book has 58 illustrations.

Thomas tells how Vick published seed catalogs from the early 1860s and then later, a popular monthly garden magazine. Vick systematized the seed business: Growing seeds, drying them, packaging and shipping them around the country. The gardens of Victorian England included flowers that became popular in America as well. Vick sold many of these flowers and they continue to be essential in today's gardens.

LEE MILLER

Gardening by Month: A Monthly Guide to Planning the Northeastern & Mid-Atlantic Garden

Independently published
186 pages, \$29.95, also available in paperback and Kindle
Published January 3



Have you ever wondered if you could have interest in the garden 12 months a year? The answer is a definitive yes. Through years of experience as a landscape designer, **Lee Miller** has accumulated a list of plants hardy

in the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic regions, chosen to provide year-round interest for your outdoor space. In *Gardening by Month: A Monthly Guide to Planning the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic Garden*, she will take you on a journey through each month while providing that perfect mix of gardening interest along the way.

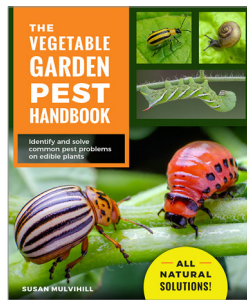
Colorful photographs with descriptions of each plant according to bloom time, foliage color or other notable characteristics will allow you to enjoy your outdoor space during every season. Additionally it includes environmental

needs, plant care and maintenance tips for each selection along with any other important information. Finally, it provides gardening tips and a summary of gardening chores for each month.

SUSAN MULVIHILL

The Vegetable Garden Pest Handbook

Cool Springs Press
208 pages, paperback, \$26.99
To be published April 6



In *The Vegetable Garden Pest Handbook*, you'll find the simple, straightforward resources and tools you need to identify common pests of edible gardens and manage them without

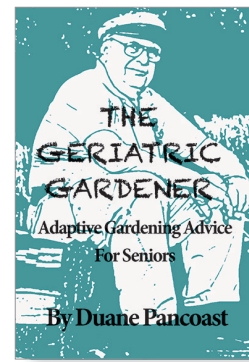
the use of synthetic chemical pesticides. Climate change and newly introduced insect pests are changing the world of gardening. Pests that once produced a single generation per year are now producing two—or even three—and accidentally imported pest insects have no natural predators to keep them in check. These leaf-munching critters can cause significant damage in short order, reducing your yields and costing you time and money, especially if your garden is out of balance or your plants are stressed and vulnerable.

Whether you're a new or seasoned gardener, author and garden pro **Susan Mulvihill** shows you how to handle pest issues by growing healthier plants, properly identifying the culprit and nurturing the overall ecosystem of the garden. With easy-to-use charts, you'll learn how to identify common vegetable garden pests based on both the damage they cause and their physical appearance. DIY-pest-control projects, coupled with up-to-date info on the best natural products, physical pest-control tricks as well as tips for managing pests with the use of traps and barriers all lead to a garden where beneficial insects and pollinators are preserved while pest populations are kept in check.

DUANE PANCOAST

The Geriatric Gardener: Adaptive Advice for Seniors

Self-published
114 pages, paperback, \$24.95
Published June 2020
As mobility restrictions began taking their toll



on his gardening abilities (but not his knowledge), **Duane Pancoast** decided to share his experiences, and how he and other senior gardeners have adapted, by writing a blog. The first post appeared on the-geriatricgardener.wordpress.com

in February 2017. After posting for a while, he learned that a name had actually been coined for continuing to garden as you age.

While continuing to write the twice-monthly blog posts, Duane also compiled and edited the best of his posts into a book so other senior gardeners would have all the information they would need at their fingertips. He notes that the complete table of contents makes it easier to find specific subjects than having to scroll down through them online. And the book is laid out in a logical progression, beginning with a section on attitude and accepting the need to adapt, followed by how to adapt to various challenges, then making tough decisions like when to downsize, making less important decisions and senior gardening through the seasons. It concludes with a section entitled "When Outdoor Gardening Is out of the Question," which focuses on houseplants and indoor gardening. *Geriatric Gardener* is available online. Review copies also are available.

JESSICA WALLISER

Plant Partners: Science-based Companion Planting Strategies for the Vegetable Garden

Storey Publishing
224 pages, paperback, \$24.95
Published December 22, 2020



Companion planting has a long history of use by gardeners, but the reasoning behind it has been filled with folklore and conjecture. *Plant Partners* delivers a

research-based rationale for this ever-popular growing technique. It offers gardeners dozens of ways they can use scientifically tested plant partnerships to benefit the garden as a whole.

Through an enhanced understanding of

how plants interact with and influence each other, this guide suggests specific plant combinations that growers can use to improve soil health and weed control, decrease pest damage and increase biodiversity, resulting in real and measurable impacts in the garden.

GEORGE WEIGEL

50 American Public Garden You Really Ought To See

Self-published

61 pages, e-book, \$7.95,

Published February 2021



Pennsylvania garden writer, designer, and tour leader **George Weigel** is just out with his sixth garden book, this one a [self-published e-book](#). It features one-page profiles of his favorite American public gardens—in order—including overviews and highlights of each garden, location and contact information, two photos of each garden, and “George’s Take” on what stands out about each place.

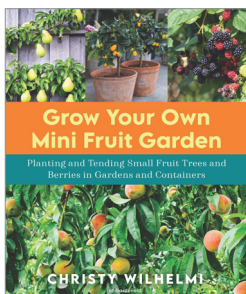
CHRISTY WILHELMI

Grow Your Own Mini Fruit Garden: Planting and Tending Small Fruit Trees and Berries in Gardens and Containers

Cool Springs Press

192 pages, paperback, \$27.99

To be published April 13



Forget the farmer’s market. Grow your own delicious, organic apples, figs, peaches, plums, strawberries, blackberries, citrus fruits, and more with **Christy Wilhelmi’s**

Grow Your Own Mini

Fruit Garden. No green thumb required.

Even beginners become successful fruit farmers with the techniques and advice Christy (the force behind the popular gardening website, [Gardenerd](#)) offers in her newest book. Selecting the best small-scale fruit trees, bushes, vines and plants for your climate, siting them properly as well as pruning your compact trees for health and productivity are some of the many topics covered in the pages of this bible of small-space fruit growing. With modern, dwarf varieties, and help from *Grow Your Own Mini Fruit Garden*, a healthy, high-yielding garden filled with fruit-producing plants is possible—even in the smallest of yards.

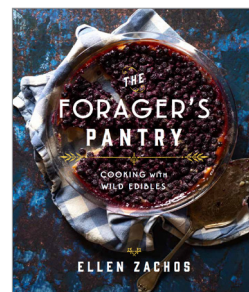
ELLEN ZACHOS

The Forager’s Pantry: Cooking with Wild Edibles

Gibbs-Smith

240 pages, hard cover \$24.99

Published March 23



If you’d like to experiment with wild foods but don’t know where to start, *The Forager’s Pantry* is for you. This comprehensive and accessible book by **Ellen Zachos** introduces adven-

turous eaters (and readers) to the world of wild edible plants, including spices and herbs, flowers, fruit, greens, nuts and seeds, tubers and roots as well as mushrooms.

You’ll start by exploring individual ingredients (like chickweed and crabapples), then move on to preservation and general cooking techniques. Master recipes let you work with whatever you’ve foraged on any one day (lambsquarters, stinging nettles or wild mustard), and each chapter also includes a few specialty recipes with specific ingredients (like acorn baklava). You’ll learn how to combine foraged foods with familiar staples, explore wild, unbuyable flavors and bring new life and excitement to your cooking. The best ingredients come from nature itself. 🌿



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Garden Communications in Changing Times



Cox Addressed Lavender Growers

Janice Cox (Region 6), is a member of The United States Lavender Growers Association (USGLA), which held its first virtual conference March 19-20. The conference was open to members. Janice spoke on "Lavender for Health and Beauty." [Click on the link](#) to learn more about lavender or join the USGLA.



AHS Honors Curbelo-Santiago

The American Horticultural Society has named **Perla Sofia Curbelo-Santiago** (Region 7) recipient of its B.Y. Morrison Communication Award. The

award recognizes effective and inspirational communication through print, radio, television and online media that advances public interest and participation in horticulture. Perla, who holds a certificate in Horticulture Therapy from Chicago Botanic Garden, is a garden podcaster and radio show host in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Grivas Named Editor and Publisher

Erica Browne Grivas, National Director for Region 6, has been named editor and publisher of a local news blog, [Seattle Greenlaker](#), for which she had been writing for several years on gardening and lifestyle features.

Marriott Retires

Wonderful friend to many, Michael Marriott retired in December from a 35-year career as senior rosarian of David Austin Roses in Shropshire, England. "So many of you know Michael personally," said **Sally Ferguson** (Region 1) of [Ferguson Caras PR](#), who worked with Michael.

"And like us, you've have treasured his generosity, deep knowledge and friendship. Forever the rosarian, Michael carries on with personal design projects and consulting."



Prinzing and Avni Form Niche Book Imprint

Established and led by Region 6 members—editorial director **Debra Prinzing** and creative director **Robin Avni**—[BLOOM Imprint](#) is a Pacific Northwest-based publishing venture whose mission is to work with creative floral entrepreneurs to produce floral, garden and design lifestyle titles by identifying authors and topics unique to the marketplace.

The two women created BLOOM Imprint as a boutique publishing company with the goal of developing these flower-inspired books from the seed of an initial concept to the final publication. Their development process is designed to maximize each author's key creative strengths. They achieve this by honing in on a core editorial purpose and visual expression to communicate an author's individual personality and brand mission through a book's pages.

BLOOM Imprint's publications reflect each author's clear vision and voice, sustainable ideas and lifestyle inspiration. Five publications are slated for BLOOM's 2021-2022 catalog.



Walliser's *Plant Partners* Wins AHS Book Award

The American Horticultural Society honors outstanding garden-related books published in North America through its annual [Book Award Program](#), which began with a list of 75 Great American Garden Books as part of the Society's celebration of its 75th anniversary in 1997. Each year since then, a distinguished committee of garden communicators selects the award recipients from among the year's new books submitted by publishers. Books are judged on qualities such as writing style, authority, accuracy and physical quality. Because of this focus on the overall quality of the winning books, the award is presented jointly to the author and publisher of each book.

GardenComm Region 2 member **Jessica Walliser's** *Plant Partners: Science-Based Companion Planting Strategies for the Vegetable Garden* offers a fresh approach to companion planting with eye-opening information, wrote Susan Eubank, judge and botanical librarian, who declared the book "made me happy" because of its practicality and ease of use. Judge **Kim Toscano Holmes** commended the author for taking the time to "compile all the research and put it together in a really great package." She has found that there is a growing interest in this topic and feels comfortable pointing people to an evidence-based resource. Storey Publishing published the book.

The Complete Book of Ferns by Mobee Weinstein, also received an AHS 2021 Book Award. Former GardenComm President and Fellow **William Aldrich** chaired the 2021 book award committee. 🌿