



## GARDENCOMM

Garden Communicators International



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

# Electronic Payment Solutions for Garden Communicators

BY KATIE ELZER-PETERS

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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.



Photo by Andrey Popov/Depositphotos.

**Investigate fees for processing credit cards and software use.**



Are you still "check"ing in with your employees, contractors, and customers by sending them PDF invoices and/or paper checks? Make it easy on yourself, your clients, and your contractors by collecting and making payments electronically.

### WHY GO DIGITAL?

- Send invoices faster
- Pay people faster
- Streamline record keeping
- Get paid faster
- Save money on stamps

### HOW TO CHOOSE AN ELECTRONIC PAYMENT SOLUTION

There are tons of electronic payment options available, but which one is right for you? You'll definitely need to compare features and benefits and decide on your priorities.

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Agrochic



GARDENCOMM  
**VIRTUAL**  
*conference*  
**OCTOBER 12-15, 2022**

## Save the Date for 2022 Conference

The Conference Committee is excited to announce the dates of the GardenComm Annual Conference and Expo, which will be virtual in 2022. The winning combination of educational programs, organizational meetings, meet-the-editor appointments, story slam and more will be held in the afternoons or evenings of October 12 through 15. Mark your calendars to save those dates.

## Call-out for Conference Speakers

The Education Committee has put out a call for speakers for our conference's educational sessions. We are seeking proposals for breakout and round table sessions for the 2022 GardenComm Annual Conference and Expo. The virtual conference will be October 12 through 15.

We invite proposals focused on business, horticulture, photography, publishing, social media, speaking, marketing, technology, sustainability, diversity in the green industry and writing. Deadline for proposals is February 12. (This deadline has been extended beyond the original date published previously in *Clippings*.) To apply to speak, please [fill out the online form](#).

## 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](http://www.ahsgardening.org/join)

# Writing a New Chapter



2021 is coming to a close, 2022 is in sight, and there is no looking back. And as far as I'm concerned, it's full steam ahead for GardenComm: Garden Communicators

International.

This past summer the Board authorized the Finance Committee to evaluate services used to manage GardenComm and then to proceed in putting out an RFP for bid for said management services. At this point in time, the Finance Committee will hopefully review the RFP replies and be making a recommendation to the Board in early in 2022.

The timeline is to have a new management team in place March 1. In the meantime, we have already begun the management transition process. Please know there are many dedicated volunteers giving of their time and expertise to help rebuild a new and even more solid foundation for GardenComm. A HUGE thank you and salute for their service.

You'll see a change in communications coming from GardenComm, too. As of March 1, you will no longer receive *The Clippings* e-blast. We will be creating our own regularly scheduled e-newsletter with more pertinent and timely content.

## JOIN US

If you haven't done so, now is the time to renew your dues. As of December 1, we already have more than 130 members who are on board for 2022. In fact, we are on pace for the highest sign-up rate in 5 years. Starting January 1, dues go up to \$145 per person and there will be no grace period.

## GET TOGETHER

If you [visit our website](#), you'll find details on upcoming in-person gatherings in January: We'll be at MANTS in Baltimore, Maryland and TPIE in Tampa Bay, Florida. Consider attending.

A reminder: Members have the opportunity to network the second Monday of every month at our Monday Meet-Ups. They happen at 7 p.m. Eastern and are scheduled through early spring. Part of the hour is spent breaking in to small groups so you get to meet new faces and visit with friends.

## UP AND COMING

We have multiple irons in the fire and while planning is still in process, I want to provide a heads-up on the following:

- The Education Committee will be announcing the winter webinar series soon.
- We are looking to gather once again in Columbus, Ohio, for [Cultivate22](#), which runs July 16-19. A Regional Meeting will precede Cultivate. If you've never been, Cultivate, the largest horticultural trade show in North America, is THE place to be. There is education, a tradeshow, new plant and new product displays, plus many industry-net-working events.
- Regional and National Directors are looking at opportunities for in-person Regional Meetings. If you think you have an idea for a great gathering, reach out to your board representatives and help plan a kick-butt event.
- The Membership Committee, in collaboration with the National Garden Bureau, is planning a virtual book launch party in March. It will be open to the gardening public and will generate exposure for new gardening books and podcasts. A second party will be held in the fall. The group thinks this could become a regular event/member benefit, helping authors and podcasters reach audiences they otherwise could not on their own.
- The Annual Virtual Conference Committee is hard at work planning for 2022. The tentative dates are October 12-15. Even when we go back to an in-person conference, we will likely keep some type of virtual event going as it has allowed members and interested parties to connect with GardenComm, especially for those who may not be able to travel.
- But, in case you haven't heard, plans are underway for an in-person Annual Conference. We'll be celebrating our 75th anniversary in 2023. Thanks to Ryan McEnaney-Rodriguez and Bill Johnson who will put together a conference to remember in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, in August of 2023.

## WE WANT YOU

Yes we do. We want you as a member AND we could use your help as a volunteer. I know you're busy. I am too. But there is a spot for anyone who is willing to give of their time, be it an hour here or there for a special one-off project or to serve on a regular committee. An organization is only as strong as its volunteer base, so give GardenComm a little love and give yourself the chance to meet, collaborate and help grow yourself and your business at the same time.

## 2022: HERE WE COME

In closing, I wish you and yours a blessed holiday season and a new year filled with good health, happiness and much prosperity. Take care my gardening friends. Be smart, be safe and garden on!

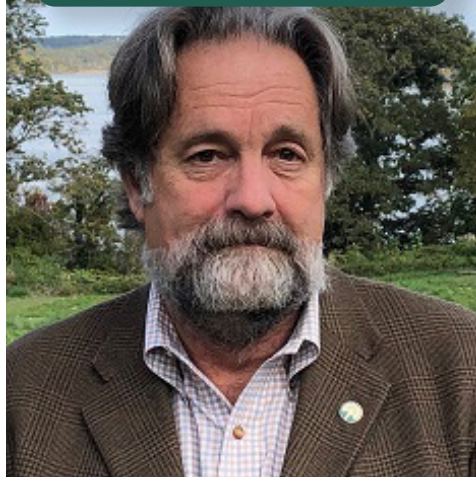


## GardenComm's Blog

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



## industry Green NEWS



### Tomlinson Named AHS Director

The Board of Directors of the American Horticultural Society has named Keith Tomlinson director of AHS. Tomlinson was the Botanical Garden Manager of Meadowlark Gardens in Vienna, Virginia,

"We are thrilled to welcome Keith as the new leader of the AHS team. Keith is a renowned horticultural director whose visionary leadership at Meadowlark Gardens spans a broad range of programmatic, operational and strategic areas," said Holly Shimizu, former Director of the U.S. Botanic Garden in Washington, D.C. and a member of the AHS Board of Trustees.

Tomlinson begins his tenure at a pivotal time for AHS and River Farm. With the Board's recent rejection of the plan to sell the historic property after a yearlong debate over its future, there are new opportunities for implementing a long-term strategic vision for both AHS and River Farm.

"River Farm is a national treasure, a spectacular property that is both a symbolic link to our national heritage and an idyllic slice of natural beauty and open space," Tomlinson said, "I'm very honored to join the AHS team on the eve of its 100th anniversary and be part of the exciting opportunity we have to strengthen both the Society's horticultural mission and the stewardship of River Farm."

Tomlinson began his new post on November 1, 2021. He succeeds Interim Executive Director J. Robert Brackman, who resigned on September 30, 2021. 🌱

## HOT OFF the press

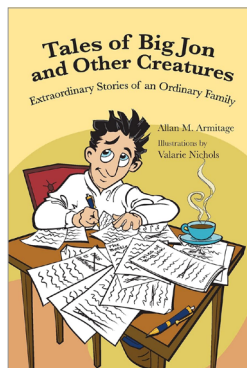
### ALLAN ARMITAGE

*Tales of Big Jon and Other Creatures*

Published by Allan Armitage

116 pages, \$22.95 soft cover

Published October 15, 2021



Young children are story machines. The simple act of growing up always results in unplanned adventures and missteps, which often are wildly entertaining to the family. As parents, we cope with their antics at the time,

laugh about them later, and then forget them as new journeys begin. The Armitage children had more than their share of adventures and their stories served as entertainment for friends and family over the years.

In this book, **Allan Armitage** has shared their stories. Many will bring back memories of children's frolics, all will make you smile, and some will even result in spontaneous belly laughter. As delightful as the tales are, Valarie Nichols' wonderful illustrations make them come alive even more. Story telling is as old as time, and time stands still as we enjoy reliving our children's youth.

A portion of the proceeds from the sale of *Tales of Big Jon and Other Creatures* will go to Extra Special People, Inc. ESP exists to create transformative experiences for people of all disabilities and their families, changing communities for the better.

### GARY R. BACHMAN

*Southern Gardening All Year Long*

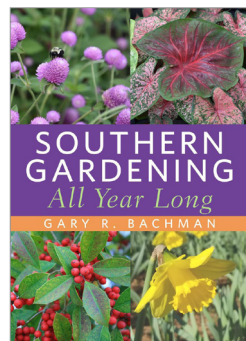
University Press of Mississippi

208 pages, 171 color illustrations, \$99

hard cover, \$25 soft cover

To be published March 2022

*Southern Gardening All Year Long* approaches southern landscapes from a different perspective. Instead of encyclopedic lists and



articles focused on botanical gardens or someone else's landscape. **Gary Bachman**, an award-winning author and host of *Southern Gardening*, connects with his audience through personal stories

that share his expertise gained over decades of planting, all told in an easily digestible format.

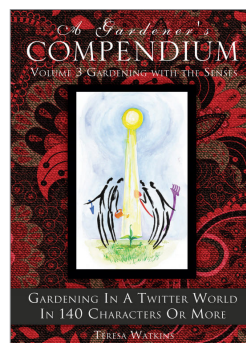
Most stories in *Southern Gardening All Year Long* focus on Gary's hands-on experience with gardening. He recounts tales about his own personal gardens—plants that have thrived and failed—and presents his advice in a common-sense style. His personal, conversational writing makes *Southern Gardening All Year Long* an old-fashioned, over-the-fence chat with a knowledgeable and helpful neighbor.

### TERESA WATKINS

*A Gardener's Compendium Volume 3, Gardening with the Senses: Gardening in a Twitter World in 140 Characters or More*  
Xulon Press

250 pages, \$25.99, soft cover

Published April 2021



If you're hungry for fully researched and cited gardening quotes designed for immediate use in social media, newsletters and emails, **Teresa Watkins's** latest book, *A Gardener's Compendium Volume 3,*

*Gardening with The Senses: Gardening in a Twitter World in 140 Characters or More* is sure to satisfy. Written for gardening enthusiasts by a garden enthusiast and botanical bibliophile, this book is so much more than a collection of quotes.

The accurate attributions and researched hash tags paired with every selected passage make the entire series a time-saving marketing resource for creating social media posts and other communications materials. *A Gardener's Compendium Volume 3, Gardening with the Senses* is the perfect addition to the promotional tool kit for all types of horticulture professionals, from garden writers and bloggers to garden designers to speakers and teachers. Every horticulture marketing professional needs a copy of this series on their desk. 🌱



At a minimum, you'll want to ask yourself these questions:

- Do I need to send invoices?
- Do I want my electronic payments connected to my accounting or book-keeping software?
- Do I sell more products or services?
- Will I collect credit card payments through an online store and against invoices for services rendered or just one or the other?
- Am I face to face with my customers or is all of my work remote?
- Do I care more about low monthly service and/or transaction fees or more about using one, all-inclusive service?

I'm going to share details about several choices that have worked for my business and contractors, but you'll want to double check with your accountant before selecting an option for your business. (I'm not a legal or financial advisor.)

### **BANK TO BANK TRANSFERS: ZELLE**

If you'd like to transfer money directly between bank accounts (from your bank to a contractor or from your client to you) without a lot of connections to external software and don't want to pay fees, Zelle could be for you. Before you begin using it, you will have to have a conversation with your financial institution— not every bank or credit union offers Zelle, and each of them have a different definition of small business. You will have to communicate with your customers to make sure that they have access to Zelle as well. Being able to have instant, fee free transfers? Definitely worth looking into.

**Best for:** Solo business owners working for or with other micro businesses

### **SEND AND REQUEST/RECEIVE MONEY QUICKLY VIA AN APP: VENMO**

Do you want customers to be able to pay you on the spot? (Say, for books at a book signing or at the beginning of a consultation appointment?) Venmo is an easy option. If your target audience is under 25, chances are they already have the app on their phone. Your customers can scan your QR code from the app (you can also print a copy to have on the table), press pay, and you're done. It's a pretty painless process. Venmo used to be strictly for family/ friend money transfers but it has opened up to business transactions.

**Best for:** People who do a lot of speaking

and/or garden coaching with associated book or product sales

### **SEND INVOICES AND RECEIVE ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS: SQUARE AND PAYPAL**

Zelle and Venmo do not have integrated invoicing options. You can request money but you can't send a formal invoice. Square and PayPal are two electronic options that allow you to create and send invoices with the same software that then collects the invoice payments. You can also send estimates and payment reminders directly through the software.

Additional features from both include availability to request a card reader for taking credit card payments on site and generating QR codes for people to scan and pay you. You can also set up recurring payments or subscription payment records with both Square and PayPal. Square allows you to securely save a customer's card on file. Fees vary with services used.

**Best for:** Solo business owners or small businesses that provide services (such as writing or speaking) and sell products (such as books or plants) and do not want an all-inclusive bookkeeping software

### **ALL-IN-ONE OPTIONS: QUICKBOOKS, FRESHBOOKS AND WAVE**

If you need an integrated way to manage your business finances, QuickBooks and FreshBooks offer everything from bookkeeping to invoicing, managing contractors to time tracking. These are the most expensive options for taking online payments, but they're also the most comprehensive and allow you to really streamline your finances. Monthly fees depend on which services you elect to use.

Wave is another option with a smaller, but still robust, all-in-one system. Its product suite includes accounting, invoicing, payments, and payroll. It is designed to make life easy for small business owners. Their accounting software and invoicing products are completely free— no set-up fees or monthly fees. If you take credit card payments through them, there are processing fees, as there are with any credit card processing system.

**Best for:** Business owners with multiple income streams that want everything under one umbrella

### **CREDIT CARD PAYMENT PROCESSORS**

When you accept credit card payments you

must have a credit card processor. Some of the electronic payment options I've mentioned serve as their own payment processors. Venmo, PayPal, Square, Wave and FreshBooks have their own credit card payment processor options. You will pay a fee to accept cards through those services.

Stripe is another credit card processor that works with many of the services listed and is often used to collect payments on ecommerce websites. Regardless of the system you choose, you'll want to compare credit card processing fees and software use fees to create the most cost-effective and functional system for your business.

### **MAKING A CHOICE**

In summary, Wave, FreshBooks, Stripe and QuickBooks offer you a full suite of accounting services-payroll, payments, invoices, cost tracking, and expense reports. If you are looking for simplicity, Square, Venmo, PayPal and Zelle offer you the ability to charge and accept payments from your customers and clients, as well as being able to send money to your contractors and employees. These tend to be less expensive but require more effort to use.

I have personally used each of the services detailed above alone and in combination with each other and they all have benefits and drawbacks. In the end your choice comes down to evaluating what each product provides and then selecting the one (or two or three) that work best for your business. 🌱

**Katie Elzer-Peters** is owner of *The Garden of Words*, a digital marketing company for the green industry.



## **Jentz Podcast Wins Award**

[GardenDC](#), the podcast hosted by **Kathy Jentz**, was recently awarded "Best DC Podcast" in a contest run by the DC State Fair and voted on by the general public. *GardenDC* is an interview-style format that covers gardening topics of particular interest to those in the Mid-Atlantic states. You can listen to it wherever you get your garden podcasts.

# Quiet, Clean Battery-Powered Landscape Equipment Gains Ground



Looking around, there's significant momentum toward a more sustainable gardening industry happening and the grassroots level drives it. More businesses

and homeowners are choosing to use electric and battery-operated landscape tools and these are having an important impact on the environment.

Noise and air pollution are primary reasons gas-powered equipment is falling out of favor. Cities and towns have banned gas-powered leaf blowers, primarily because of noise. Some have limited the use of electric-powered leaf blowers to certain dates. California Governor Gavin Newsome recently signed legislation that will ban gas-powered small engines in 2024. In New York, State Senator Pete Harckham has introduced legislation that, if passed, would require electric or battery-powered equipment by 2027.

Besides being quieter and lighter weight, battery-powered equipment gives off no emissions and doesn't need gas, oil, spark plugs or air filters to operate. The call for a more sustainable world is being heard, and it is exciting to see innovative changes taking place in the horticultural industry and beyond.

## IT'S BETTER WITH BATTERY POWER

For landscaping equipment, the battery-powered choices are now extensive. There's a battery-powered version for just about everything you need for just about every job. Rechargeable-battery recycling has also advanced significantly in North America within the last two years, as some of the prototype recycling facilities have become operational.

There is also expansion planned for these facilities over the next couple of years as larger and larger ones get built. Recycling plants can now recover more than 95% of the materials in lithium-ion batteries, which are widely used today in electric vehicles, landscaping equipment and portable electronics.

## ONE COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE

American Green Zone Alliance, a Los Angeles-based organization founded by Dan Mabe, provides training and certification that focuses on low-impact garden equipment. It is committed to improving the quality of life for communities, bettering the working conditions for operators, while using the best practices in the landscape-maintenance industry.



Debra Knapke

Sustainability Committee chair, **Debra Knapke** using her new battery-powered Makita chainsaw in her own garden.

When landscape companies started to use battery-powered equipment about 20 years ago, nickel cadmium (NiCd) or nickel metal hydride (NiMH) batteries were used. These were far inferior to the lithium-ion (Li-Ion) batteries used today.

Now with the push to get more power out of batteries, more landscapers are making the switch. Battery-powered equipment is quieter (75 dB compared to 95 dB for gas), is easier to operate (lighter weight), less expensive to operate and involves no gas, oil, mixing or fumes.

## WIDE SELECTION

The availability of battery-powered equipment has never been better with options for lawn mowers (stand-on or walk-behind), string trimmers, edgers, tillers/cultivators, hedge trimmers, chain saws, power tools, leaf blowers, snow throwers, dethatchers and pole pruners.

Battery-powered lawn mowers weigh less than their gas counterparts and many fold up, so they are easier to transport in a vehicle, take up less space when stored and some can be hung up on a wall after use.

— Continues on page 7



Using battery-powered equipment is only part of the sustainability story. Batteries must be disposed of sustainably, too. The components in the batteries need to be recycled or reused to close the loop.

## BATTERY RECYCLING

After much research, several North American lithium-ion battery-recycling plants have been (or are in the process of being) constructed. Nevada-based Redwood Materials plans to triple the size of its existing recycling facilities and plan to build another facility. The company also is working hard to create a circular (closed-loop) supply chain by recycling raw materials such as cobalt, copper and nickel that are retrieved from end-of-life batteries.

After the 2019 launch of a successful lithium-ion battery recycling operation in Ontario, Canada, Li-Cycle expects its much larger Arizona operation to open in 2022 and its North American hub in Rochester, New York, to be operational in 2023.

Drawing data from its industrial-scale demonstration plant that opened in 2019, Lithion Recycling in Quebec, Canada, plans to launch its first commercial recycling plant in 2022 or 2023. The goal is to provide a sustainable, affordable and local solution for recycling lithium-ion batteries.

## SOLAR RECHARGED BATTERIES

Indiana is the home of an innovative company that has taken sustainability one-step further. Solar Earth Lawn Care uses solar power in its mobile battery-charging trucks so it can offer emission-free, low-noise, lawn-mowing services.

“At Solar Earth Lawn Care, we know how important it is to not just say the right thing, but to do the right thing. Providing this alternative technology to help homeowners keep their families healthy and their lawns beautiful, is our way of contributing what we can to further the sustainability of our planet, said founder Gus Mariscal.

The company offers an alternative lawn-mowing option for homeowners that have the same concerns about the environment that the founder has, and it strives to educate those who may not be aware of the effect that regular gas lawnmowers are having on the environment.



Quiet, powerful and lightweight, the Makita lawn mower runs on two 18V Lithium-ion batteries.



Amy Mullen, Spotts Garden Service

Christine Wilkerson of the Spotts Garden Service in Indianapolis using a Stihl battery-powered blower to clean a sidewalk of grass clippings.

“We know that what we do now will plant the seeds to help future generations. It just makes sense,” he said. 🌱

## RESOURCES:

### Battery Recycling:

Lithion Recycling

<https://www.lithionrecycling.com>

Li-Cycle <https://li-cycle.com>

Redwood Materials

<https://www.redwoodmaterials.com>

### Battery Charging:

Solar Lawn Truck <https://solarlawntruck.com>

### Low-Impact Landscape Maintenance:

American Green Zone Alliance <https://agza.net>



Amy Mullen, Spotts Garden Service

Tom Spotts uses a Stihl battery-powered trimmer to touch up the turf edge at the Spotts Garden Service office in Indianapolis.

**Anne Marie Van Nest** is a Past President, Fellow, and member of GardenComm's Sustainability Committee. She is a freelance garden writer, copy editor, and proofreader. When away from the computer she can be found hiking somewhere along the 900 kms of the Bruce Trail enjoying the wilderness of the Niagara Escarpment in Ontario, Canada.



# A Well-traveled Road to Design: Sabrena Schweyer



Born on a mile-square farm in South Central Ohio, surrounded by rolling hills and woods, garden designer Sabrena Schweyer remembers the exact moment she became

an environmentalist.

"The place I played with my brother was a pasture field with a beautiful stream that ran through it, Sabrena said. "It was far enough away from the house that mother had to blow the horn to get us back. We had crawfish and overhanging trees and we made magical forts with the plants that grew there. When my father decided to drain that field and turn the stream into a ditch, it was one of the most traumatic moments of my childhood. I knew even at 6 years old that what they had done had destroyed the nature that I loved. I thought I knew better than the adults and saw it as a real bad thing they had done."

## UNEXPECTED BUMPS AND TURNS IN THE ROAD

Sabrena's path to gardening and design was not a direct one. "My parents expected me to get my degree in dairy science, 20 minutes down the road at Ohio State, and then come back to work on the farm. I was the dutiful daughter and got that degree but knew I had no intention to milk cows for the rest of my life. While I was there, I met some horticulture students who were way more interesting than the 'dairy boys,' and far less scary than the tobacco chewing 'dairy girls.'"

The hort students took her to the arboretum and encouraged her to take her first plant course, which she promptly dropped out of. "I felt very intimidated by these people as I felt I didn't know anything, but I got hooked and eventually took all the courses I could," she said.

A professor at Ohio State encouraged Sabrena to apply for a study abroad program at Oxford University in England. "The piano lessons I took as a child paid off and I traveled



**Above: Salisbury-Schweyer designed and installed a permaculture garden in Ohio.**

**Right: Sabrena Schweyer specializes in gardens that are good for people and the planet, gardens that fed them and clients spiritually.**



there as a musician. I studied history and did my tutorial on English landscape parks of the 18th century and how they reflected the whole democratization of England," she said.

When she returned to Ohio, she studied art, architecture and interior design at Kent State.

After graduating, Sabrena returned to Europe for a year of travel and learning. This personal sojourn confirmed that she wanted to work in the world of plants. Borrowing money from her sister and a combination of internships

— Continues on page 9



and farm stays, including a stint on a goat farm in France, allowed her to pay for the trip and fill in the gaps in her gardening education. Those 12 months of traveling and visiting hundreds of gardens were transformative for her personally and professionally.

### FINDING HER TRUE PATH

Once again back in Ohio, Sabrena started gardening professionally. When she discovered that one of her wealthy clients had already been advised by almost every landscape architect in the area, she realized she knew as much—if not more—than they did about gardens. She decided to design gardens herself.

"At the time nobody in Ohio saw the landscape as an outdoor space, as an integral part of their lives as they did in Europe," she said. "I began teaching continuing education courses which brought me clients and taught me a lot." Another pivotal moment for Sabrena was joining the Perennial Plant Association (PPA), which led to her meeting Wolfgang Von Oehme. "We were on Long Island (New York) at The Rosenberg Garden and he was standing under an umbrella. I knew he took an environmental approach to the land. I walked up to him and said, 'I think you talk to nature spirits.' He took my hand, and he eventually became a mentor and a close friend. I was so blown away as a young designer."

Sabrena founded the award-winning landscape design and development group, Salisbury-Schweyer with her husband Sam in 1996. Their intent was to make gardens that are good for people and the planet—gardens that fed them and their clients spiritually.

Another PPA friend, **Stephanie Cohen**, encouraged her to join the Garden Writers Association (now GardenComm) in 2006. Although she had written regularly on gardening topics for *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Sabrena did not feel she could join until she had published an article in *Fine Gardening*. "As the shyest person imaginable, I never thought I would get up in front of an audience and speak at international conferences, but I do," Sabrena said. Sabrena's lecturing has taken her everywhere from The Holden Arboretum to professional conferences and garden clubs throughout the U.S.

### CALLS YOUNG PEOPLE TO PROFESSION

When *On the QT* caught up with her, she was in Nashville at the America Society of

Landscape Architects conference as a judge for the student awards. Sabrena seems well suited to the job. "We have so many friends who are millennials or younger and I think getting to this younger generation will require addressing two audiences: The people that use plants as decorative elements and the gardeners that want purposeful plants. Nurturing that connection with a tree, a houseplant... it's a way in, [towards] recognizing indoor spaces as sanctuaries."

For Sabrena, the GardenComm conferences were essential to her feeling connected to the group. She feels word of mouth is the best way to grow the organization, through reaching out to fellow designers and people in allied fields. Dispelling the notion that you don't have to be published to join, she said, "Getting to those who are working with beginning gardeners is key to making them feel successful and reminding them it's ok to fail."

### EXCITING NEW PROJECT

The COVID-19 pandemic was a blessing in disguise for her and her business. "We lost our office space lease after 18 years, so we downsized and moved into the renovated space in our house, which we had built before the pandemic hit, so we were already set up. The pandemic brought a complete transition of our office team and a brand-new set of employees in the field, but it also brought a lot of love letters from fans and potential employees, people seeking meaningful work."

Their approach to making transformative landscapes that are not only beautiful but environmentally minded is becoming mainstream. After three decades of garden making, they are about to embark on their biggest and most ambitious project yet—a permaculture Asian-style landscape, which will include a food garden and a natural swimming pool, while remediating storm water on the site. It sounds like the kind place that 6-year-old Sabrena would be happy to play in again.

[Learn more about Sabrena](#) and her work. 🌿

**Carmen DeVito** writes and gardens in Brooklyn, New York, and is the founder and lead garden designer of [Garden Cult](#). You can listen to more than 200 episodes of her award-winning podcast *We Dig Plants* free on iTunes or on [Heritage Radio Network](#).

## Upcoming GardenComm EVENTS

### Webinars

**Thursday, February 17**

7 p.m. Eastern

### SEO for Y-O-U, Part 2

Presented by Joe Williams, Digital Marketing Specialist for **Spring Meadow Nursery**

In this deeper dive into Search Engine Optimization, Joe Williams will explain how things are tracked on the internet. You'll learn why it's important to be collecting data from your website and how to do so. Discover how to use that data to grow your business. Learn how providing the best content and keywords on your website can assist in promoting your work and expanding your career. Attendees will have their questions about SEO and digital marketing answered by Joe at the end of the presentation.

**Cost:** \$20 members, \$30 non-members

**Tuesday, March 8**

3 p.m. Eastern

### Hiring A Virtual Assistant

Presented by **Noelle Johnson**, Horticulturist & Landscape Consultant

Feeling swamped? Learn about virtual assistants and how they can benefit your business and help you increase your income. In this webinar, you will discover the different tasks a VA can take on, which decreases feelings of being overwhelmed and allows you to focus on the parts of your business that only you can do. Noelle Johnson will talk about how to hire a virtual assistant and the best practices for successfully managing one.

**Cost:** \$20 members, \$30 non-members

# Nominations Open for 2022 GardenComm Honors



**Maree Gaetani**



**Carol Michel**

**Maree Gaetani and Carol Michel were made Fellows last year.**

Each year, GardenComm recognizes industry excellence and service to the association with its Honors program. We hope you will take the time to submit a nomination on behalf of a deserving nominee. Self-nominations are welcome. Sitting officers and directors are not eligible for Honors recognition, because awards forwarded by the Honors Committee are approved by the Board of Directors.

The 2022 Honors Committee (**Deb Wiley**, chair; **Kelly Norris**; **Becky Heath**; **Bill Thomas**;

and **Debra Prinzing**, past chair) welcomes early submissions for our annual awards program. Deadlines and an online submission link will be available later this year. For now, please email your nomination, with supporting information to: [debwiley@hotmail.com](mailto:debwiley@hotmail.com). If you don't receive an acknowledgement of your nomination, please call Deb at 515.255.4280.

**Hall of Fame** is the highest honor GardenComm can bestow on a person whose life and career has materially affected and advanced the mission and values of GardenComm.

Members only.

**Honorary Member** recognizes a non-member who has contributed measurably to the GardenComm mission and values through professional or avocational activities, but is not otherwise qualified for GardenComm membership.

**Fellow** recognizes a member in good standing who has demonstrated exceptionally high degrees of skill, professional ethics and dedication to the GardenComm mission and values. Two members may be elected Fellows each year.

**Wilfred J. Jung Distinguished Service Medal** is awarded to an Allied Trade member who has contributed significantly to the promotion of home gardening and garden communications. Only one award winner may be named each year.

**Emergent Communicator Award** recognizes a member under the age of 40 who has demonstrated exceptionally high degrees of skill, professional ethics and dedication to the GardenComm mission and values. One award winner will be named each year.

**Cynthia Westcott Scientific Writing Award** recognizes individuals who communicate new ideas, concepts or scientific findings related to horticulture and gardening in terms that are easily understood by laypersons. Non-member nominations are welcomed.

**Green Medal Sustainability Award** recognizes the accomplishments of individuals or allied organizations dedicated to wise and respectful care of the Earth, and implementation of sustainable and regenerative practices. Non-member nominations are welcomed.

## New GardenComm Members

### **Laura Baddish**

Baddish Group • (917) 601-0051  
[lbaddish@baddishgroup.com](mailto:lbaddish@baddishgroup.com)  
Wyckoff, NJ

### **Carlo Balistrieri**

Carlo Balistrieri Photography • (262) 490-6163  
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Lake City, SC

**Carrie Borgenicht** • (215) 219-7476  
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Philadelphia, PA

### **\* Patricia Buskirk**

Seeds by Design, LLC • (530) 438-2126  
[amy@seedsbydesign.com](mailto:amy@seedsbydesign.com)  
Willows, CA

### **Raffaele DiLallo**

Ohio Tropics, LLC • (216) 325-3376  
[rcdilallo@gmail.com](mailto:rcdilallo@gmail.com)  
Pepper Pike, OH

### **Jenkins Farmer** • (803) 386-1866

[lushbulbs@sc.rr.com](mailto:lushbulbs@sc.rr.com)  
Columbia, SC

### **Jacqueline Gorski**

California Flower Bulb Co • (412) 310-3987  
[jackie.gorski@gmail.com](mailto:jackie.gorski@gmail.com)  
Irwin, PA

### **Leslie Harris**

LH Gardens • (434) 466-2323  
[lharris@lhgardens.com](mailto:lharris@lhgardens.com)  
Charlottesville, VA

### **Sharron Johnson**

Cooper-Young Garden Walk • (901) 409-9751  
[goddessharron@yahoo.com](mailto:goddessharron@yahoo.com)  
Memphis, TN

### **Steven Maurer** • (267) 231-4269

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Philadelphia, PA

### **Carolyn Roth** • (540) 204-4225

[carolyn.roth@gmail.com](mailto:carolyn.roth@gmail.com)  
Roanoke, VA

### **\* Leigh Schaffer**

Everde Growers • (800) 542-0209  
[lschaffer@everde.com](mailto:lschaffer@everde.com)  
Houston, TX

### **Cheryl Capaldo Traylor**

Six Seasons Garden Consulting • (919) 427-5130  
[cherylcapaldotraylor@gmail.com](mailto:cherylcapaldotraylor@gmail.com)  
Cary, NC

### **Acadia Tucker** • (603) 953-6612

[acadia.tucker@gmail.com](mailto:acadia.tucker@gmail.com)  
Cherryfield, ME

### **Robert Welch**

LandTenders • (517) 347-0752  
[welchrob@comcast.net](mailto:welchrob@comcast.net)  
Okemos, MI

### **\* Suzie Wiest**

Everde Growers • (800) 542-0209  
[swiest@everde.com](mailto:swiest@everde.com)  
Houston, TX

KEY: \* Allied Trade Member





Thanks to these GardenComm members for helping to grow the organization in 2021. For every new member you bring, you'll save \$20 on your 2022 membership dues.

#### ONE MEMBER

Helen Andrew

Cathy Wilkinson Barash

Pam Beck

Marie Butler

Natalie Carmolli

Ann Cicarella

Sally Cunningham

Perla Sofia Curbelo

Katie Elzer-Peters

Janet Endsley

Garden Center Magazine

Toni Gattone

Grace Hensley

Chris Kelleher

Dawn Hummel

Paul Kelly (St. Lynn's Press)

Cherie Tripp LeJeune

Shannie McCabe

Mary Fran McQuabe

Carol Michel

Vanessa Gardner Nagel

Bobbie Schwartz

Dr. David Ward

Christy Wilhelmi

#### TWO MEMBERS

Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp

Maria Zampini



## National Days for January, February, March

GardenComm partners with the National Garden Bureau to present [#Garden365](#), ideas for articles, promotions, Instagram and other outlets.



**NATIONAL  
SEED  
SWAP  
DAY**  
The last Saturday of January

### JANUARY

- 1 National Hangover day/Bloody Mary Day  
— #NationalHangoverDay
- 5 National Hydrangea Day  
— #NationalHydrangeaDay
- 5 National Bird Day — #NationalBirdDay
- 6 National Bean Day — #NationalBeanDay
- 10 Houseplant Appreciation Day  
— #HouseplantAppreciation
- 15 National Hat Day — #ShowUsYourGardenHat
- 19 National Popcorn Day  
— #NationalPopcornDay
- 30 National Seed Swap Day — #SeedSwapDay



### FEBRUARY

This is National Bird Feeding Month

- 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



Photo courtesy Wilmarie Rivera

Horticultural therapist and GardenComm member **Perla Sofia Curbelo-Santiago** helps a resident at Dorado Living Home plant a yellow walking iris (*Trimezia martinicensis*).

### MARCH

Third full week — Horticulture Therapy Week 8

International Women's Day

- 12 Plant a Flower Day
- 13 National Good Samaritan Day
- 14 Learn About Butterflies Day, Pi Day
- 17 Corned Beef and Cabbage Day
- 20 First Day of Spring
- 21 National Fragrance Day
- 26 National Spinach Day
- 28 National Weed Appreciation Day
- 29 National Mom and Pop Business Owners Day

# Betty (Birute) Earl

June 7, 1943 - October 19, 2021

## Remembering Betty



Photo courtesy David Earl

What I have discovered, over 22 years of membership in GardenComm (it was GWAA when I joined), is that the quality of the relationships you can form with others in this organization is clear, deep and bonding. It's hard to explain how spending just a few days—or even hours—with someone year after year at the Annual Conference can lead to a lasting friendship. It's a membership perk that doesn't

get listed, a perk that has suffered during two years without in-person conferences.

There are many in our organization I hold dear, based on conversations from a bus ride, over drinks or dinner, while strolling in a garden or buzzing around a trade show. Some of these are people I don't know well but admire greatly. Many are folks I would like to know better. And a few become friends well beyond a mere shared investment in and love of the garden industry.

Betty Earl of Naperville, Illinois, who died October 19, 2021 at age 78, was one of the latter—perhaps even to our mutual surprise. I am trying to remember exactly when we met, though I'm pretty sure it was on a conference bus ride. It was probably shortly after 2004, when she published her first book, *In Search of Great Plants: The Insider's Guide to the Best Plants in the Midwest*. At the time, I was the garden editor at *Midwest Living* magazine, so of course I was interested in this book about the best nurseries and garden centers of the region I covered.

### FRIENDSHIP ROOTED IN GARDENCOMM

As I got to know Betty, I learned that we did not share political viewpoints. But we shared so much else: A love of cats, curiosity about the world—especially the world of gardening and a commitment to doing a job well. I learned about her love of decorating for Christmas, her addiction to plants and how she took in stray cats—even naming one scoundrel Wiley after she described one as “wily.” I knew tidbits about her work with early computers. I knew she liked to drive retired law enforcement vehicles. I knew that her given name was Birute and that she had Lithuanian heritage. I appreciated that she was never blunt or mean but did not sugarcoat her words when it came to expressing an opinion. I met her husband, David, who always called her Birute, when I visited her home. We even went together to a regional GardenComm meeting in the Omaha area but considered ourselves lucky if we saw each other once a year.

Chris Hansen, plant breeder and founder of Plant Solutions, recalls that Betty's annual visits to his nursery in Zeeland, Michigan, were a highlight of his year. “She had such a vitality for life and told the most



Photo courtesy Chris Hansen

**Betty Earl visits Chris Hansen's Growing Solutions in Michigan and becomes enamored with one of his donkeys.**

enthraling and vivid stories about her various life experiences,” Chris said. “She seemed to love our entire crew and especially our three miniature donkeys. Every time we talked on the phone, she wanted to hear the latest antics that the animals and crew had been up to.”

### SELFLESS AND ENTHUSIASTIC

Chris and Betty could spend an hour talking about gardening, animals and plant shopping. “Betty exuded life's vitality to the fullest and she was such great fun to hang out with over the past 20 years I've known her,” he said. “She was selfless with her enthusiasm for all things gardening. I could always count on Betty to cheer me up with great words of encouragement whenever I was a bit stressed or overwhelmed. Betty was definitely in a league of her own and will be greatly missed.”

Eight years ago, after Betty was diagnosed with Stage 4 breast cancer, she used her considerable intellect to search out the best treatments and aggressively pursue the disease that bought her time but left her generally unable to attend conferences.

It wasn't until after Betty's death that I learned more details about

—Continues on page 13



the remarkable arc of her life as I worked with her husband to prepare her obituary, which follows, using many of his recollections. She told David that she would “come back and haunt him” if he didn’t call me after her passing. Such a Betty thing to say. I had no clue she had stopped treatments about a month earlier.

Dear Betty, rest in peace—and plants.

### IMMIGRATED TO U.S. IN 1949

Birute Kazimiera Lukasevicius was born in Kaunas, Lithuania, June 7, 1943, the daughter of Kazys and Albina Lukasevicius. During the Nazi occupation of Lithuania in World War II, Birute and her parents had to leave their homeland, running for their lives and residing in displaced person camps. At one point, Birute spoke better German than her native tongue. Her parents recalled an instance when Birute wandered outside in a town being bombed. Luckily, she survived. She somehow got the notion that her parents could buy her a brother if they had enough chocolate and candy. Birute, apparently with a big stick, set out to find it. Her parents were amazed to find the cache of contraband their little girl managed to accumulate which ultimately proved to be very useful.

In 1949, Birute, her parents and grandmother immigrated to the United States, where they lived with a sponsor and subsequently in a storefront while Birute’s parents found jobs. Eventually the family bought a home in the Chicago neighborhood of Brighton Park, where Birute grew up. She became a naturalized U.S. citizen with her family in 1961.

### TEEN MAGAZINE WRITER

While attending Maria High School, Birute secured a lucrative job with Teen magazine, interviewing and writing articles about popular bands and celebrities like Nick Noble and Tony Bennett.

After her graduation, she earned a degree in chemistry at the University of Illinois. To help pay for her books and college supplies, she worked at a downtown bank where she was so fast and accurate, they had to fine-tune a machine for her, and they allowed her to come to work as she pleased.

After college, Birute began her working career as a secretary at Illinois Institute of Technology Research Institute, where she employed her speedwriting skills and accurate 60-words-per-minute typing skills along with her informational search and retrieval skills. She excelled at researching various topics. Here she met the love of her life, David C. Earl, whom she married on November 4, 1972.

### TECHNICAL BACKGROUND

Shortly after her marriage, Birute left the research institute for a job with Chicago Bridge and Iron as a technical librarian and information retrieval specialist, where she automated the standards upgrade system by programming an early Hewlett Packard tape drive computer. Due to her people and technical skills, she advanced to a position known as a foreign financial compensation specialist, a position previously held by engineers who had miserably failed in the work. Birute effectively handled herself in the presence of a male-dominated company and showed them that a young woman could be far more than eye candy.

While at CBI, Birute pursued a wide range of other endeavors. She studied and became a licensed real estate appraiser for Illinois and Wis-

consin. She owned and operated a wedding flower shop that specialized in silk flower arrangements and made good use of her extraordinary design skills. She was a designer and manufacturer of on-line items that included coordinating large orders manufactured off shore for sale to well-known box stores.

Thanks to her love of gardens and the beauty of unique flowers and plants plus her extensive horticultural knowledge, her last career involved searching out and writing articles for local and national magazines. She spent several years scouting gardens for the Garden Conservatory. Her love of flowers and plants in general inspired her to publish the book *In Search of Great Plants* in 2004, a guide to reliable, quality nurseries where unique plants could be purchased in the Midwest. In 2012, she published the book *Fairy Gardens: A Guide to Growing an Enchanted Miniature World*.



Photo courtesy Deb Wiley

**Longtime friends Deb Wiley (left) and Betty Earl photograph succulents at the GardenComm conference in 2014.**

### ALWAYS WILLING TO TRY

Birute enjoyed many varied activities, including reading murder mysteries, which she also attempted to write. She enjoyed shooting guns with her husband David. At a course she took at the Lagrange (Illinois) Police station, she managed to best a Vietnam veteran at a target shootout. She was known to climb a tree to retrieve one of David’s model airplanes.

There just wasn’t anything Birute wouldn’t do if it interested her or was beneficial in some way or to someone. She was always willing to assist, whether helping someone properly plant a succulent or recommending a book she liked on string theory to somebody she thought might be interested. She loved animals and adored the strays or originally abused cats she adopted into her home. Birute was a fearless, unique individual with the drive and intelligence to do whatever it takes to accomplish something she believed was important. Birute and her husband David absolutely adored each other and desire that their ashes be combined in the same urn at final burial.

Services and interment will be private. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the animal welfare program of your choice in honor of Birute’s love of animals.

— Deb Wiley

# Lynne Harrison

July 27, 1938 – September 21, 2021

It is with deep sadness that I share the news of the death of my mom, garden photographer **Lynne Harrison**. My earliest memories have always been around her—and her camera—in the garden.

In an era when few women were encouraged to study math and science, she persisted despite being required to wear a dress in the lab. After graduation from Stanford University in 1960, with a Bachelor of Sciences degree in chemistry, she married Dr. Halstead Harrison. They lived briefly California, Germany and Michigan, before moving to the Pacific Northwest, where I was raised.

We visited many private gardens together throughout the Northwest, starting in the mid-1980s at the resurgence of interest in the herbaceous perennial border. I was given my first camera en route to one of our annual Hardy Plant Study Weekend adventures that took us together from Vancouver, British Columbia, to Eugene, Oregon.

## ACCOMPLISHED FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHER

She was a freelance photographer for my hometown newspaper on Mercer Island, Washington, where her dramatic photos of apartment fires, local dignitaries, charming schoolchildren and our cats appeared regularly. Mom's lifelong calling as a photographer led her to photograph portraits of noteworthy individuals of the late 1960s, including her friend Imogen Cunningham, Dr. Linus Pauling (my parents' chemistry teacher) and the Dalai Lama, among numerous others.

Her early photojournalism work appeared in *The New York Times*, *Seattle Times* and *Mercer Island Reporter*. Her fine art and portrait photography is on permanent collection at the Center for Creative Photography in Tucson, Arizona, has been exhibited at the Oakland Art Museum in California, the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle and other galleries throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Having studied chemistry, she was a skilled technician as well as an artist and produced a large body of work in her own darkroom. Mom's photography work transitioned into the digital age, where she turned her camera to botanical and horticultural subjects (because plants don't get annoyed when you take their portraits), photographing landmark public and private gardens.

## CLOSE TIES TO HERONSWOOD

Her work at the Heronswood Garden in Kingston, Washington, led to the publication of four horticultural books for which she was the primary photographer: *Fragrance in Bloom: Cultivating the Scented Garden Throughout the Year*, *Perennials: The Gardener's Reference*, *The Explorer's Garden: Rare and Unusual Perennials* and *The Explorer's Garden: Shrubs and Vines from the Four Corners of the World*.

Additionally, her work appeared in numerous other books, magazines, catalogues and publications. Her encyclopedic knowledge of plants and their Latin names was unmatched as she immediately identified the plants she encountered. Regularly, she would arrive home with perennials, trees, and shrubs to grow in her own garden. Our last trip together was a stroll around the Bellevue Botanic Garden,



cameras in hand, naturally.

She was a founding member of the Northwest Perennial Alliance, and belonged to numerous garden and photo organizations including the Northwest Horticultural Society and the American Society for Media Photographers. She became a member of the Garden Writers Association (now GardenComm) prior to 1998. Throughout much of her life, she has been accompanied by her dear companion Siamese cats, which would accompany her in the garden, around the house and even in her rowboat.

She split her time between Mercer Island and Bainbridge Island, which allowed her to be closer to her children and grandchildren. She is survived by her husband of 62 years, three children, their spouses and her four grandchildren. Remembrances are encouraged in the form of planting a tree, or a [donation to Heronswood Garden](#).

— Grace Hensley



# New Plant Intros: The Bailey Bay

BY GRETCHEN MCNAUGHTON

*Supporters and sponsors of GardenComm receive the opportunity to provide an article about their business for On the QT. In this article, Bailey Nurseries tells readers how new plants come to market.*



Three little words: new plant introduction. We're all familiar with those three words. They fill us with excitement, bring out our curiosities and get us digging in the dirt to test out

the newest plants on the market.

But have you ever taken the time to think about who and what makes these new plants possible? At [Bailey Nurseries](#), we are fortunate to have a team of passionate individuals who put countless hours of work into this process to ensure that every new introduction is truly something unique that growers, retailers and consumers will not only want but love.

To begin with, this process takes time. "Going from a germinated seedling to an introduction takes at least five years, and for some plants, can take even longer," said David Roberts, the General Manager and Head Breeder at Bailey Innovations. "It's definitely not for the impatient."

## IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Bailey believes that for any plant to be considered for introduction, certain fundamental criteria must be met:

- Does it have a characteristic that truly makes it special?
- Does it have better habit, better flower power, earlier bloom, longer flowering period, increased color, better heat tolerance or improved disease resistance?

The list goes on. "Some would argue that we are slow, but I like to think of it like we are intentionally deliberate," said Alec Charais, Chief Marketing and Product Development Officer. "The process must have integrity because, in today's landscape, everybody is trying to find the next big thing. But the reality is, as a responsible genetics company, you have to have the patience and understanding of the needs of the marketplace in mind."



## BEHIND THE SCENES

To pull back the curtain on the greenhouse, if you will, let's walk through one of our recent new introductions. Little Hottie® panicle hydrangea is an exciting introduction to our First Editions® Shrubs & Trees brand, which will be available to consumers in the spring of 2022. And before you say, "How many more panicle hydrangeas do I need?" hear us out.

"The number one sought-after shrub category has been, and likely always will be hydrangeas," Charais said. "So, we are always looking to improve and expand the category."

Using that as a starting point, our Breeding, Production, Brand Management and Sales teams hit the ground running, collecting data and making sure the new introduction was thoroughly trialed. "As a grower, we know how important it is for a plant to be produced economically while also maintaining or improving quality. A plant that is loved by consumers and hated by growers, or vice versa, isn't what Bailey is looking for," Charais said.

## MARKETPLACE NEED

The team concluded that there was a gap in the market for a compact hydrangea with a dense habit that could also stand up to the heat of the southeast. Thus began an extensive four-year trialing process. The process was started by Plant Introductions, Inc. and finished out by Roberts and his team at Bailey Innovations.

Little Hottie® was put through countless trials both in Georgia and Minnesota. "One unique aspect of Little Hottie® was that it was trialed side-by-side with two of its siblings to determine which three would be best suited," Roberts said.

They were tested for cold and heat tolerance, flower power, disease resistance and which would be easiest to produce in a nursery setting. In the end, the team produced the Little Hottie® we know today: A compact, extremely heat-tolerant, versatile panicle hydrangea that's a flowering machine.

## GETTING THE WORD OUT

There's another side of the process once the trialing is complete, and that's marketing. "When we think about marketing, it goes beyond a campaign. What's most important is that we share our excitement with the world in the most authentic way we can," Charais said.

Whether that's through digital strategies like social media and connected television, conversations with garden communicators, by our sales team going to garden center events and answering customers questions or our public relations efforts that allow Little Hottie® to be featured in national publications like *HGTV Magazine*, it's all in an effort to meet our customers where they are and give them the information they need.

So, yes, the next time you see or hear "new plant introduction," get ready to dig in the dirt and test out the plants for yourself. But also get ready to ask us questions about how it came to market, what truly makes it different, and who made this new introduction possible. 🌿

**Gretchen McNaughton**, a GardenComm member, is Communications & Content Specialist at [Bailey Nurseries](#).



# Sourcing Sustainable Gardening Info Got You Stumped?



## THE HARD WAY

When you search the term *sustainable gardening* on the web, Google will return more than 79.9 million results. *Beneficial insects* will net you nearly 60 million; *stormwater*

*management*, 13 million; *sustainable farming*, 217 million; and *native plants*, 835 million. With so much information available, how do you locate what you're trying to find without spending hours searching all over the internet?

If you've already tried this yourself, you know that authoritative information on sustainable gardening and farming is not always easy to source. The topics aren't necessarily high priorities for institutional websites and good information can be buried within multiple layers of dropdown menus or stuck onto to a website in what seems to be an afterthought.

## AN EASIER WAY

But what if you could go to a single website where someone has already done all of that searching, sifting and organizing for you? [The Sustainable Gardening Library](#) is a born-digital collection of documents, spreadsheets, photos, and videos that focuses only on sustainability issues related to gardening and farming. In its Topics app, you'll find curated expert information sorted into 30 easy-to-understand categories—all organized alphabetically with a simple visual directory.

The Sustainable Gardening Library was created with GardenComm members in mind. In fact, GardenComm members' responses to our surveys determined the categories of information that became our focus and identified their most respected information sources (public gardens, universities and government agencies came in at >85%).

We've used a GIS-based mapping platform to show you where our experts and their host institutions are located, provided their contact information and added a few bells and whistles, such as scalable USDA Plant Hardiness Zone and EPA Ecoregions of North America maps.



Photo courtesy of Lois J. de Vries

**Online, all the time. Sustainable gardening, farming and green infrastructure projects around the country are at your fingertips in the Sustainable Gardening Library 24/7.**

## WHO WILL WANT TO USE IT:

### Landscape Professionals

Maybe your client needs convincing that sustainable landscape practices are right for them. Maybe you're working outside your usual comfort zone and some quick reference material would be a big help. Or, maybe you just want to browse for inspiration. Our Library's science-based information and pictorial examples provide information, instruction and inspiration.

### Writers and Journalists

Looking for story starters or people to interview? Now you can go to a single website and find emails and phone numbers for more than 85 experts on 30 different topics. Sustainable Gardening Library collaborators offer content that ranges from beneficial insects to xeriscaping, news about student initiatives, such as Bee Campus USA, public garden Master and Tree Care Plans, and much more.

### Media Professionals

Broadcasters and podcasters under pressure

to fill airtime with fresh ideas and new faces will find them in the Sustainable Gardening Library. Check out the Library's Organizations app to look up institutions and authoritative sources near you or across the country.

### Educators

Speakers, teachers, docents and coaches can refresh their presentations and curricula by integrating materials from our Library collaborators, such as video clips, regionally appropriate native plant lists, planting plans, tip sheets and gardening guides. We've also developed an overview and lesson plan for middle school teachers, available on [our YouTube channel: Sustainable Gardening Library 101 for Middle School Science Classes](#).

### Researchers

Academics, students, journalists and other researchers will find a wealth of material, including what their cross-disciplinary peers in other organizations are doing. Beyond the content supplied by our collaborators, our map-based

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### GROWING THE LIBRARY

The Sustainable Gardening Institute was founded in 2015 as a resource for providing science-based information on sustainable gardening. The institute's extensive online library brings together the knowledge of experts from public gardens, other nonprofits, universities and government agencies. Currently, there are more than 85 collaborating organizations. If you'd like to support our work, please incorporate the Library as a regular part of your work and link to the Library on your website ([www.sustainablegardeninglibrary.org](http://www.sustainablegardeninglibrary.org)) as well as in your books and articles. To make a donation, visit [www.sustainablegardeninginstitute.org](http://www.sustainablegardeninginstitute.org). We are a 501 (c)(3) Corporation – all donations are tax-deductible.

Photo credit: Biodiversity Heritage Library



Photo credit: Practical Farmers of Iowa

platform offers the opportunity to study the similarities and differences among ecosystems within the same USDA Plant Hardiness Zones. Our [EcoRegions app](#), which combines the hardiness zones map with the EPA Ecoregions of North America map affords a deep dive into the important effects that native soils, vegetation, hydrology, terrain, wildlife and historic land use have on which plants can thrive in a given zone.

### MAYBE YOU JUST WANT TO NERD OUT

Well, you *could* read about the history of embedded herbarium specimens in the Arnold Arboretum Library at Harvard. Or, binge watch videos on organic weed management for farmers, or the Lost Butterflies (and moths) of New Jersey. Or just spend a lazy afternoon poring over the millions of horticultural art and digitized dried specimens of the Arnold, New York Botanical Garden, Billie L. Turner, Biodiversity Heritage and other collections in our Libraries & Herbaria group.

The next time you need to locate authoritative information on sustainable gardening or farming, do yourself a favor and start your search in the Sustainable Gardening Library. It will put you at least one step ahead of the competition. We've made the Library portal as intuitive as possible, but if you need some help using it for the first time, you'll find video tutorials on [our YouTube channel](#).



From the Biodiversity Heritage Library collection, an illustration by William Curtis for his 1777 book, *Linnaeus's System of Botany, So Far as It Relates to His Classes and Orders of Plants*.

As with any library, our collaborators' materials are available to you at no charge, but please remember to respect copyright, ask for permission before reproducing, and credit content providers appropriately.

Check out research, field trials, personal experience reports, field day videos and more from Practical Farmers of Iowa, Pasa Sustainable Agriculture, the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Cal Poly and UC Santa Cruz under our Farming & Food topic.

[Follow us on Facebook](#) to see our collaborators' latest posts and other sustainable gardening and farming news. And please, don't keep it a secret.

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