

On the



GARDENCOMM

Garden Communicators International



National Federation of Press Women
2020 1st Place National Award for
On the QT • May-June

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Executive Director's Message | 2 |
| President's Message | 3 |
| Pitch Sessions | 4 |
| Green Industry News | 5 |
| Member Profiles | 6 |
| Garden 365 | 7 |
| New Members | 8 |
| Helping Us Grow | 8 |
| Hot off the Press | 9 |
| New Website Login | 9 |
| Business | 10 |
| Member Profiles | 12 |
| Thank You to Our 2021 Sponsors | 13 |
| New & Noteworthy | 14 |

... ATTENTION ... NEW WEBSITE LOGIN

With GardenComm's new association management software Rhythm on the website, members need to establish new logins/accounts.
Please see page 9 for instructions.

A Tropical Welcome!



Picture credit: © Jardín Botánico UPR

University of Puerto Rico's Botanic Garden, located in the north part of the island, will be one of the many international garden scenes featured during GardenComm's Virtual Garden Tours. Region 7 member Perla Sofía Curbelo will show us some of the areas visitors enjoy the most, like The Guanacaste's (*Enterolobium cyclocarpum*) Garden, Palmetum Garden, The Laguna Grande Reservoir, and the experimental food-production garden.

Summer 2021 Conference Takes Shape

- All speakers are confirmed and info is available on the registration page.
- So far we have confirmed 10 editors for Pitch Sessions (see page 4 for details).
- We're having a Story Slam.
- Plan for an after-party event.
- There are 12 education sessions planned.
- We'll tour at least five gardens from throughout the world.

Don't miss a minute!



Go to GardenComm.org
and click on [EVENTS](#)
for all the details



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

© 2020 GardenComm: Garden Communicators International All rights reserved

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

The information contained in articles and advertisements herein represents the opinions of the authors and advertisers, and although believed to be accurate and complete, is not represented or warranted by GardenComm to be accurate or complete. GardenComm disclaims any and all responsibility for damages suffered as a result of reliance on information contained herein.

2020-21 GARDENCOMM OFFICERS

President **Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp** • Write for You! LLC

Vice President **Maria Zampini** • UpShoot LLC

Treasurer **C.L. Fornari** • The Garden Lady

Secretary **Denise Schreiber** • Schreiber Horticultural Consulting

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

Executive Director **Marla Schrager** • Kellen

DIRECTORS

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

REGION 1

Sally Cunningham (2022 N)

Writer, Tour Director, Educator

Charlie Nardozzi (2021 R)

Gardening with Charlie Nardozzi

Cris Blackstone (2022 R)

REGION 2

Kathy Jentz (2021 N)

Washington Gardener

Teresa Speight (2021 R)

Cottage in the Court

Kim Roman (2022 R)

Square Foot Gardening 4U

REGION 3

Diane Blazek (2022 N)

All-America Selections/
National Garden Bureau

Alicia Rittenhouse (2021 R)

HyR BRIX Fertilizer

Pam Bennet (2022 R)

Ohio State University Extension

REGION 4

Kate Copsey (2021 N)

Freelancer

Helen Newling Lawson (2021 R)

Spot On Communications

Peggy Riccio (2022 R)

pegplant.com

REGION 5

Bill Johnson (2022 N)

Bill Johnson Nature Stock

Photography Inc.

Shelley Cramm (2021 R-South)

Garden in Delight

Chris Link (2022 R-North)

Plant Addicts Inc.

Randy Schultz (2022 R-South)

Schultz Communications

REGION 6

Erica Grivas (2023 N)

Chris Sabbarese (2021 R-South)

Corona

Grace Hensley (2022 R-North)

Fashion Plants

Noelle Johnson (2022 R-South)

AZ Plant Lady, LLC

REGION 7

Ken Brown (2021 N)

gardening-enjoyed.com

Niki Jabbour (2021 R)

The Weekend Gardener on News

Talk Radio 95.7

Andrea Whitely (2022 R)

Andrea Whitely Garden Consultant

Gardening Grips Executive Director



This summer is well under way and the personal influence on me from the GardenComm community is now closer to home than ever...my home.

Pictured here is my amateur attempt at a variety of flowers, herbs and vegetables. Living in southern Wisconsin has meant a portable garden and I'm loving it. This picture was taken May 24, a relatively sunny day when my "plant babies" were sunning on the driveway—until some rain showers and dipping temperatures came

through, relegating them to the garage.

Although I killed an already-sprouted store-bought cucumber plant, my most proud moment to date is that it has been replaced by five small cucumber plants I started from seed, all on my own. Flowering of these vegetables has yet to be seen but I know it is still early. My family has been able to enjoy some of the lettuce mix and dill, which were yummy. I'll be reporting back when this goes to print.

Although my personal time has been spent faking it until I make it as a gardener, GardenComm has kept me and the staff busy with many exciting activities this spring and summer, culminating with the Virtual Annual Conference August 11-14. Here are some things to know now and a few others to keep on your future radar.



Marla's "portable garden"

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- This year's Virtual Conference will feature a keynote by Shaun Hester, 12 Education Sessions (you get all recordings!), Pitch Session Opportunities, What's New Preview, Expo with one-on-one engagement and featured plants and products, a Special Meet the Authors event, a Plant & Garden Story Slam, Virtual Tours from Across the World, the 2021 GardenComm Awards & Honors Ceremony, a Closing Party and more. [Register by July 21](#) to save with the member discount.
- New for 2021: We're partnering with Order Ease to provide a world-class sponsor and attendee experience. This includes a virtual trade show with the ability to directly interact with attendees featuring your plants and products. We know it's all about relationships and conversations!
- [Click HERE](#) to check out a short video with the exciting new virtual booth features we added to the sponsor packages. This benefit is in addition to brand recognition and other communication options you can take advantage of as soon as you sign up. The exposure will be for the conference and through the end of the year.
- Our sponsorship opportunities can be customized to meet your goals and fit any budget. [Click HERE](#) to check out all the opportunities, or contact Alan Goodin, 212-297-2128.

TECHNOLOGY UPGRADE

- Although none of us could've foreseen the challenges of 2020, Kellen continued its focus on the five pillars of our 2020 Strategic Vision—technology, processes, people, communications and growth—carrying those through 2021 and beyond.
- Our technology strategy is to implement new enterprise systems to improve both internal and client systems (including cloud-based systems) to ensure secure, consistent, and reliable access to tools, knowledge and resources across devices and geographies. There are no additional fees being charged to GardenComm for these system enhancements and upgrades.

—Continues on page 3

- Our Operations systems (ADP timesheets, Concur Invoicing and Expenses and Great Plains) have been replaced with NetSuite, impacting Kellen's accounting, timekeeping, invoicing, financial reporting and dashboards. In addition to user-experience updates, the new system provides more insights to better serve our team and clients.
- The third and most exciting transition is an upgrade to our client operations. As many of you know, Kellen grew through acquisition. We now manage more than 100 clients in three countries and five states. With that acquisition came a multitude of association-management systems. In a business where efficiencies are everything, our leadership has long been in search of a new system that addresses varying client needs. We have determined that the first and only cloud-native association-management platform, Rhythm, is the best solution. It provides enhanced member and staff experiences across devices without the limitations of legacy systems. GardenComm's transition to Rhythm took place at the end of June.
- Later in 2021, GardenComm will also have access to a SharePoint Online portal for file-sharing and collaboration with volunteers as part of Kellen's business-systems upgrade.

THE 2021 NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The new term will begin at the end of the 2021 Virtual Annual Conference in August. Thank you to all of the candidates who ran for an office and congratulations to those who will be taking the reins next month. Our organization depends on volunteers like you. We appreciate the continued service of our current officers and look forward to the leadership of the newly elected officers.

I hope this summer will bring many job and travel opportunities as restrictions lift. When you are home, my wish is that you are surrounded by beautiful, vibrant blooms and lush vegetation throughout the season.

All the best,


Marla Schrager

mschrager@kellencompany.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE JO ELLEN MEYERS SHARP

My Unprecedented Presidency



Here it is: My last missive to GardenComm members, supporters and others as my term as President winds down. Honestly, the past two years have been nothing like I expected. I was at least hoping for paid hotel accommodations at the Annual Symposium—and well, you know what happened.

UNEXPECTED LEARNING CURVES

Although nothing really went as initially planned, I did learn a lot of things, and hopefully acquired a skill or two along the way during COVID-19.

I learned a couple of new French words. *Force majeure* is a clause in contracts that says everything is off when extraordinary events or circumstances occur. There needs to be agreement between the parties for this to take effect, however, and that was the tricky, expensive part.

I learned how to start a membership group from **Noelle Johnson's** webinar, who shared her experiences with her venture in Phoenix. I started mine in April and have 18 paid participants. There are four benefits to their membership: A one-hour conversation on Facebook with experts; a downloadable PDF of Plant of the Month; a how-to video or photo illustration; a review of the month, a sneak peek for what's coming up and a garden checklist for the upcoming month.

I've learned what a wonderful cadre of volunteers GardenComm has. In particular, I thank **Susan Martin, Carol Michel, Ellen Zachos, Sally Ferguson, Bill Johnson, Diane Blazek** and **Katie Elzer-Peters**, members of my garden tool shed, people I could talk about ideas, problems and other matters. Other volunteers' efforts include:

- Education Committee taking on programs for conference and webinars
- Task force to determine what a different GardenComm might look like
- Task force to develop more revenue streams
- Committee to take over much of the virtual conference planning and execution of the plans
- Committee to market and communicate our programs and benefits to others
- Committee that enhanced communications with new and lapsed members
- Committee to bring sponsorships and other support to our organization
- Committee that consistently helps us understand our role in promoting sustainable living
- Committees that judge media awards and vet honors recipients

I'm grateful to everyone who stepped up during the last two years to ensure GardenComm continued to serve our members in new and different ways. I loved the idea of our special fundraiser last December when **Natalie Carmolli** and her husband Joe performed *A Betrothal* for our members.

I hope these volunteers and others sign on to continue to help GardenComm survive, if not thrive.

I wish the new President **Maria Zampini** and the new officers and directors all the best as they head up this wonderful group and lead it into the future—whatever it brings.

Thanks to everyone,



Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp
jemsharp46@gmail.com

Expand Your Network with a Pitch Session

Wondering if a pitch session is right for you? The answer is yes!



Pitch Sessions are back for GardenComm's Virtual Conference Summer 2021! Whether you have a story idea, portfolio to share, or are simply seeking to build

professional relationships, pitch sessions offer the perfect venue. Everyone participating in a session is looking to make connections. Editors want to meet writers, photographers, and other talented storytellers. Communicators are seeking new outlets for their work and feedback on projects. Pitch sessions offer a win-win situation for everyone involved.

PITCHING YOURSELF AND YOUR WORK

Not every story is the right match for an editor, but pitch sessions are about more than just one story. Editors want to know about you—your areas of expertise, your platform, your past work. And of course, they are interested in your ideas. Don't be surprised if an editor listens to your pitch and then asks, "Are you working on anything else?" Be ready to talk about other projects, even those still in the concept stage.

When pitching a children's story at a creative writing conference, the agent asked me this very question. He was not interested in the story I pitched, but connected with the young adult novel I was working on. He gave me his card and asked me to send the novel to him when completed. And just like that, my list of professional contacts expanded.

PICK AN EDITOR'S BRAIN



Consider using your laptop to show an editor your work during a pitch session.

Pitch sessions also provide an opportunity to ask questions, gain feedback, and seek advice. Not everything you discuss needs to be a finished work.

At a recent conference I sat down with an editor during a pitch session to discuss a project I am currently working on. I let her know up front I wanted to pick her brain and she graciously obliged. In fact, our conversation carried over to lunch the next day. I garnered valuable advice while expanding my professional network.

I've come to realize pitch sessions are as much about learning as they were about pitching. When visiting with garden editors, you might gain valuable insights into the direction they are taking their publication,

future topics they wish to explore, or types of stories they have difficulty assigning. Tap into an editor's vast experience and use it to your advantage.

TOO NERVOUS TO PITCH?

The first time I signed up to pitch a story at a writing conference I was more than a bit anxious. I practiced my pitch over and over, tweaking and perfecting every word. And when I sat down across from the agent I signed up to meet, I forgot the words I'd so carefully prepared. But it didn't matter, because this wasn't the agent's first pitch session.

Hearing pitches is part of any editor's job, and they are remarkably skilled at setting writers at ease, asking questions that get you talking, and digging into the meat of a story. That is not to say don't come prepared, just relax a little. Editors and agents are not there to intimidate you. They attend conferences to meet people who can provide them with great content. They want to get to know you.

So what are you waiting for? Sign up for a pitch session today! 🌱

Kim Toscano is co-chair of GardenComm's Education Committee.



GARDENCOMM
VIRTUAL
conference
SUMMER 2021 • AUGUST 11-14
Garden Communications in Changing Times

National Gardening Survey Results Released

The National Gardening Association reports there were 18.3 million new gardeners last year and veteran gardeners gardened more. Diversity and youth were evident among new gardeners.

These are some of the results of NGA's 361-page *National Gardening Survey*, the nation's most comprehensive annual compendium of gardening activity and purchasing trends.

Also released was a companion survey *What Gardeners Think*, a special 426-page report on gardeners' attitudes and gardening behavior. Included with each survey are industry expert analysis and commentary.

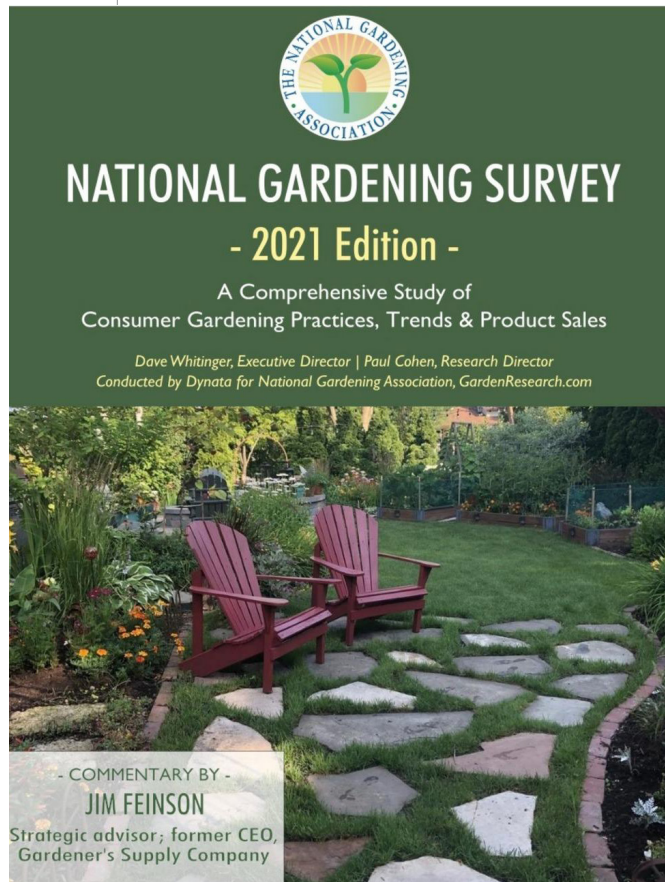
"Taken together, the surveys paint a full picture of the current boom in gardening and an analysis of possible future trends," said Dave Whiting, executive director of National Gardening Association. "While the gardening industry can expect another strong year in 2021, as the nation emerges from the pandemic there are clouds on the gardening horizon."

The surveys confirm that gardening participation was way up, with 18.3 million new gardeners documented from this national sample. Veteran gardeners are also gardening more, and gardeners of all types are participating in more gardening activities. Two-thirds of gardeners tried a new gardening activity.

Growth in flower gardening is catching up with the still-strong surge in food gardening. Nearly one-third of gardeners had difficulty finding at least one type of product they intended to purchase in 2020.

COVID-19 INSPIRED GARDENERS

Forty-two percent of gardeners say they increased gardening due to the COVID pandemic, while only 9% gardened less. Eighty-eight percent of gardeners intend to increase or maintain their level of gardening activity in 2021 (36% more, 52% the same), and 89%



plan to increase gardening after the pandemic (30% more, 59% the same). The intent to garden more is particularly pronounced among the gardening cohorts of younger gardeners, gardeners with children, apartment/condo dwellers as well as Black gardeners and gardeners of color.

YOUNGER AND MORE DIVERSE

The surveys reveal a more diverse and divergent gardening population. There was disproportionate growth of gardening among traditionally less well-represented groups, including younger families, apartment/condominium dwellers, renters and people of color. Gardening participation remained flat or declined among Baby Boomers. These gains could speak well for the future of gardening, but only if these new gardeners continue to engage in gardening post-pandemic.

Younger gardeners are more driven by

growing food and by family activity benefits of gardening, while older people garden more to beautify their homes and for exercise. All age groups cited the mental health and emotional benefits of gardening, and most gardeners continue to seek more gardening knowledge and better tools.

SLIGHT INCREASE IN ONLINE SHOPPING

There was only modest evidence of an increase in online shopping, a trend analyzed in further detail in the surveys. Online shopping of gardening products at general online retailers (such as Amazon) remains relatively small. The surveys reveal the continuing strength of home centers and mass merchandisers in the gardening market, and the accompanying commentaries outline strategies that independents can take to differentiate themselves from those larger players.

INTEREST IN CANNABIS CULTIVATION

About one half of respondents age 18 to 44 say they would definitely or probably cultivate cannabis if it were legal to do so, but only one in eight of those above age 55 say they would grow cannabis. One third of households who do not currently participate in any lawn and garden activities express interest in growing marijuana, a possible hidden accelerator for the gardening industry. 🌿

If you'd like your own copies ...

These reports can be purchased individually at [National Gardening Survey](#) and [What Gardeners Think](#) or bundled together at a discounted price.

McDowell's Visit to Dickinson's Home, Garden Creates Visionary Flash

Photo courtesy of Shelley Cramm



Gardening, writing, and exploring history come together gloriously in the career of **Marta McDowell**. These passions have led her to extraordinary biography projects that speak to the

inner gardener's curiosity, the twinkling "I-knew-it!" that our great historical and literary icons must have had a garden in their midst. Treasured names—Beatrix Potter, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Emily Dickinson, and coming soon, Frances Hodges Burnett, author of *The Secret Garden*—have unknowingly invited Marta into their lives by the backdrop of garden scenery in their sagas.

"I am intrigued by writers who garden and gardeners who write. The pen and the trowel are not interchangeable, but seem to be linked," wrote Marta in her preface to *Beatrix Potter's Gardening Life*. This visionary flash first came to Marta while touring Emily Dickinson's garden in Amherst, Massachusetts.

"I visited the Emily Dickinson Museum when I was on a business trip," said Marta in recounting from her prologue career as a vice president for Prudential Insurance Company, based in New Jersey. "And I tripped into garden writing by accident."

She had always been a fervent gardener, influenced by her rural heritage in Illinois, which led her to enroll in adult education classes at the New York Botanical Garden on nights and weekends. However, pausing among the poet's posies, "I had a 'road to Damascus' moment, in a way, where I saw this connection between a writer and a garden. And I thought, 'Well! That would be very interesting to write about—and to research.'"

And in a moment, her heart made a meaningful turn toward a captivating new calling.

Interestingly, it was full-circle. Marta graduated college with an American Studies degree from a program she loved but which required a full load of reading and writing about any and all things American. To be inspired later, on the grounds of one of America's most famous poets, and leave a prominent position in the "pursuit of happiness" of her own American dream, is an American story all its own.



Photo courtesy of Marta McDowell

Marta S. McDowell says she tripped into garden writing by accident.

She "left leading for weeding," her husband quips.

GARDENCOMM: A NATURAL STEP

Filled with affection for gardening, a passion to write, and the opportunity to make a career change, now Marta needed to confront her literary-agent niece's advice: "You're nobody!" Accepting this forthrightness in her humble manner, Marta began researching how to get published. Her niece advised her to start with articles, publishing in any kind of periodical to establish credibility for the bigger hope of a book contract.

In researching mode, Marta came across the Garden Writers of America Association, the original name of GardenComm, in *Writer's Market: The Most Trusted Guide to Getting Published*—this was pre-Internet—a big book available in a library's reference section. "I'll join

that!" she thought at once.

Marta has kept current in the organization over the years by reading the bulletins, *Clippings*, and *Quill and Trowel* magazine, and now *On the QT*, a natural magnet for her pursuit of the writer-garden connection. She has attended several annual conferences over the years; her husband traveled with her to the Chicago conference and they enjoyed the garden tours together.

FROM WRITING TO SPEAKING

As Marta pursued her writing topics, she developed concurrent lectures and talks, debuting in the program from which she received a certificate at NYBG. Her years teaching and training at her corporate job made it a natural move to present her work to garden audiences.

—Continues on page 7

"Whatever you have done before," she tells her NYBG students to this day, "it will count. You just have to figure out what your skills are and how they apply to this new world."

Marta's attentiveness to in-person engagements over time led to her feature in the recent PBS American Masters series, *Laura Ingalls Wilder: Prairie to Page*, as well as a full schedule of Zoom presentations to garden clubs and botanical gardens in the COVID era.

Next up from Marta's pen is *Unearthing the Secret Garden: The Plants and Places That Inspired Frances Hodges Burnett*, available September 2021. In Marta's books, she writes on a first-name basis with her historical authors. Her extensive research and travel to the gardens they walked and tended grows an affinity and friendship with them across the centuries.

Likewise, I have referred to Marta as an

endearing friend, grateful that GardenComm brought us together. Find out more about Marta McDowell's books and lectures at www.martamcdowell.com 🌿

Shelley S. Cramm is the author of devotions for *God's Word for Gardeners Bible*, writes the Devotions Blog at www.gardeninDelight.com, and speaks on plants of the Bible to garden clubs and faith groups. She is co-chair of the Membership Committee for GardenComm and a Region 5 Regional Director..

GARDEN 365



GARDENCOMM
Garden Communicators International

On the QT is partnering with the **National Garden Bureau** to promote all of the "days of" that relate to gardening or nature. Garden365 gives us a heads-up on celebrations,

special events and community activities that we can share with our audiences. The National Garden Bureau present ideas for articles, promotions, Instagram and other outlets.

NATIONAL DAYS FOR JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

July

- Smart Irrigation Month (#WaterSmart)
- National Blueberry Month
- 2nd week in July:
International Plants at Work Week

- 1 – National U.S. Postage Stamp Day
- 3 – National Eat Your Beans Day



- 4 – Independence Day
- 5 – National Apple Turnover Day
- 11 – National Mojito Day
(Harvest your mint!)
- 15 – Give Something Away Day
(Share perennials? Or your harvest?)
- 22 – National Hammock Day
- 24 – National Tequila Day
- 28 – National Dance Day
(Dance in your garden!)
- 29 – National Lasagna Day
- 30 – National Father-in-Law Day

August

- 3rd Saturday in August:
World Honey Bee Day

- 1 – National Girlfriends Day and
National Night Out
- 3 – National Watermelon Day
- 6 – National Wiggle Your Toes Day
- 8 – Porch Day
- 10 – National Lazy Day
- 12 – National Garage Sale Day
- 13 – Left-Hander's Day
- 14 – National Relaxation Day
- 17 – National Non-profit Day

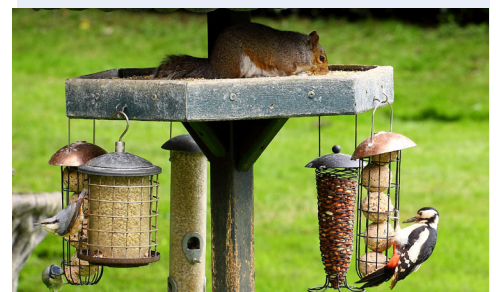
GARDENCOMM
Garden Communicators International

- 18 – National Fajita Day
Mail Order Catalog Day
- 21 – National Senior Citizens Day
- 24 – National Peach Pie Day
- 31 – National Diatomaceous Earth Day

September

- 3rd week in September:
National Indoor Plant Week

- 1 – National Food Bank Day
- 2 – National College Colors Day
- 4 – National Wildlife Day



- 7 – National Acorn Squash Day
- 9 – National Swap Ideas Day
- 26 – National Johnny Appleseed Day
- 28 – National Good Neighbor Day
- 30 – National Family Health & Fitness Day

For more information:

[Garden 365](#)
[International Plants at Work Week](#)
[American Grown Flowers Week](#)
[National Indoor Plant Week](#)

Welcome

New GardenComm Members

Helping **US**
GROW!

Anna Archibald • (620) 330-7691
annaarchibald1@gmail.com
Lawrence, KS

Page Dickey • (860) 453-4069
Dickeypage@gmail.com
Falls Village, CT

Linda Langeloa
kalagh11k@yahoo.com
Julesburg, CO

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.

Connie Bijl • (905) 807-9395
clbijl90@gmail.com
Hamilton, ON Canada

Lucie Galvin
Lucie.Galvin@gmail.com
Balboa Island, CA

Mary-Fran McQuade • (416) 698-2430
mfmqcq@sympatico.ca
Toronto, ON Canada

ONE MEMBER

Cathy Wilkinson Barash

Marie Butler

Natalie Carmolli

Sally Cunningham

Katie Elzer-Peters

Janet Endsley

Garden Center Magazine

Grace Hensley

Chris Kelleher

Dawn Hummel

Paul Kelly (St. Lynn's Press)

Cherie Tripp LeJeune

Shannie McCabe

Mary Fran McQuade

Vanessa Gardner Nagel

Bobbie Schwartz

Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp

Dr. David Ward

Anne-Marie Brown • (647) 280-1496
annemarie@urbanpeony.com
Ontario, ON Canada

John Hecker • (217) 356-8391
stipes01@sbcglobal.net
Champaign, IL

Amy Mullen • (317) 435-9098
amym@spottsgardens.com
Indianapolis, IN

Laura Cabak • (204) 795-0091
lcabak@assiniboinepark.ca
Winnipeg, MB Canada

Amelia Beth Jeanroy • (207) 370-0526
amy@thefarmingwife.com
Robbinston, ME

Cara Parks • (443) 852-5608
cara.parks@gmail.com
New York, NY

Baylor Chapman • (415) 902-0821
hello@baylorchapman.com
Los Olivos, CA

Robert Kourik • (707) 538-7096
rkourik@sonic.net
Santa Rosa, CA

Sarah C. Shaw • (970) 274-1850
sarahchaseshaw@gmail.com
Basalt, CO

Deborah Chud • (617) 964-2563
dfchud@yahoo.com
Chestnut Hill, MA

See page 9 for new website login instructions!

TWO MEMBERS

Maria Zampini

PW
PROVEN
WINNERS®
COLOR CHOICE
HYDRANGEA

become a
HYDRANGEA EXPERT

read more

ZINFIN DOLL® panicle hydrangea



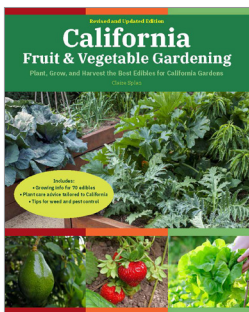
CLAIR SPLAN

California Fruit & Vegetable Gardening, 2nd Edition

Cool Springs Press

240 pages, paperback, \$26.99

Published April 20



California's diverse and unique growing conditions offer special challenges to food gardeners. The updated and expanded 2nd edition of *California Fruit & Vegetable Gardening* provides detailed

profiles of more than 70 edible plants that thrive in California's distinctive growing conditions.

From soil preparation and seed-starting to safely managing California's most troublesome vegetable garden pests, author **Claire Splan** guides you to your most productive garden ever. Whether you grow in containers, raised beds, an extensive kitchen garden, backyard veggie patch or community garden, *California Fruit & Vegetable Gardening, 2nd Edition* serves as an invaluable resource to West Coast gardeners at every level.

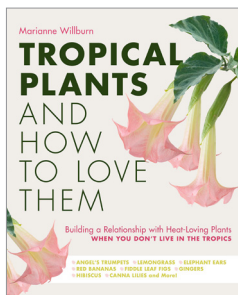
MARIANNE WILLBURN

Tropical Plants and How to Love Them: Building a Relationship with Heat-loving Plants When You Don't Live in the Tropics

Cool Springs Press

208 pages, hardcover \$27

Published May 4



Tropical plants are energizing. They awaken a tired summer garden with lush, sensuous foliage and fascinating flowers and turn a suburban patio into a sophisticated, late-

night paradise. But if you garden in a temperate climate and have been reluctant to commit to what you're sure will be too much work, it's time to let *Tropical Plants and How to Love Them* author **Marianne Willburn** act as your tropical matchmaker.

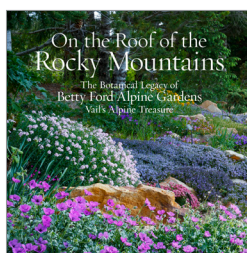
Using five relationship types to help you understand the different levels of care required for many common (and uncommon!) tropicals, Marianne introduces you to outstanding tropical plants by providing care instructions, easy tips for seeing these tropical beauties safely through the winter, and advice for designing a tropical paradise of your own.

SARAH CHASE SHAW

On the Roof of the Rockies: The Botanical Legacy of Betty Ford Alpine Gardens, Vail's Alpine Treasure

Distributed by Gibbs Smith, Publisher
276 pages, hardcover, \$45

Published June 29



Written by Colorado author and landscape architect, **Sarah Chase Shaw**, *On the Roof of the Rocky Mountains* is a tribute to the world-renowned Betty

Ford Alpine Gardens, named in honor of former First Lady Betty Ford, a part-time resident of Vail, Colorado, and avid gardener.

The book opens with the Gardens' origins as a small, community-based garden in the resort town of Vail, tracing its development into a respected global leader in alpine flora, species conservation, and a tourist attraction.

Illustrated with 285 full-color images by professional landscape photographers, the book transports readers through the exquisite alpine landscapes around the world before focusing on the Rocky Mountains and the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens' own unique collections of alpine species. Perseverance in the face of climate change is a theme throughout the book, which features guest essays by internationally recognized botanical experts, esteemed scientists, and distinguished botanical garden leaders. 🌿

NEW!

The Website Login Has Changed

Rhythm, our new association-management software, requires that all members create new logins and accounts.

Here are the instructions:

1. Go to

<https://portal.gardencomm.org>

The login screen will appear (below).

GARDENCOMM
Garden Communicators International

Welcome

Log in to continue to the GardenComm Portal

Email address
|

Password

[Forgot password?](#)

Continue

First visit? [Click here to set up your account!](#)

2. Click on the rectangle outlined in red where it says **Click here to set up your account!**

3. Enter the email associated with your account, create a new password and click **Continue**.

4. Rhythm will send you a verification email. This step ensures that you have entered a valid email address.

5. Click on the link in that email to verify your account.

(Be sure to look in your spam folder if you don't receive it within a couple of minutes after submitting the form.)

6. Now you will be able to log in and set up your account.

Essential Website Elements for Garden Communicators



One good thing that we've learned from the lockdowns of 2020 and beyond is that we can become proficient with tech. We've taken online cooking courses and mastered Zoom happy hours. We

may even have binge-watched all of Netflix. Some of us have pivoted our onsite garden design consultations to virtual ones or offered evening talks to garden clubs across the country.

Let's make sure our websites are updated to highlight our new skills. Here are the trends I see developing, with my top tips for what to implement.

ESTABLISH A DIGITAL BUSINESS CARD

At the very least, you need your own website. A single page with your basic contact information is sufficient, and a photograph of you will instill confidence. If you spend all of your time on a particular social media platform talking about your work, your services, your books, remember that it could be shut down with a single tweet. The only way your own digital slice of the Internet goes away is if you don't pay the bill.

For writers, consider creating a media kit. GardenComm member and former president **Debra Prinzing** did this beautifully when she launched her *Slow Flowers Journal* last summer. She has a web page dedicated to telling readers and reviewers what's in the book. One brilliant feature Debra included was a 10-minute video describing her journey about writing the book and some behind-the-scenes of the book being printed. She was able to create this with an iPad and the guidance from Amy Stewart's Skillshare Class called *Create Your Own Book Video: A Step-by-Step Guide for Authors*.

PROVIDE A GUIDED JOURNEY

With the fire hose of information available on the Internet today, it is our job to be the knowledgeable guide. GardenComm member **Mary-Kate Mackey** gave a great workshop at the Salt Lake City conference about applying the Hero's Journey to our writing. We can



Photo: Christin Hume / Unsplash.com

Implement these strategies and tips to strengthen your brand and create a marketplace presence.

also use this concept to help organize the elements on our website. It is worth the time to get to understand your ideal reader, which problems they need solved, and which questions they will have as they continue on their journey.

- **Make sure your website starts with a heroic image.** Show readers what is possible. Whether it's a stack of books you wrote, or a sumptuous organic garden, give your readers the inspiration to start. If you can do it, so can they.
- **Acknowledge their problems.** On your home page, feature three blog posts that address what you have struggled with, and reassure readers that you were able to overcome that writer's block or your previous black thumb. When you can demonstrate that you have overcome their same problems, they are more likely to read every word on your blog, follow every social media post and rave about your next book.
- **Offer a solution.** Generously give your readers advice on how to get started on solving their problems. Make sure you're not overwhelming them with all of the

details. Show them how they can have a quick win. Offer photography or writing prompts or provide advice on growing microgreens. We learn best by doing and often the biggest problem our readers have is actually getting started. Give them an early success.

- **Be there.** Let your readers know how they can get more help when they are ready. GardenComm member **Noelle Johnson** acknowledges that growing in Arizona is entirely different than in the rest of the country. She offers a membership subscription that builds on her free content. Once a new gardener has an easy win with her suggestions for fuss-free flowers for the desert garden, they can sign up to learn more. Make sure there's a simple call to action on your website where they can get on your email list, take your course, or buy your newest book.

OFFER SOMETHING FOR FREE

Email is one of the simplest digital marketing tools available, and despite the distractions

– Continues on page 11

of FaceChat and Pinstagram, its effectiveness has persisted. I would rather have a newsletter in my pocket to read quietly on my own schedule, than to be bombarded with all the pings and notifications of the Internet.

To find your audience, offer something valuable. It is worth the time to create a simple PDF to package your ideas and give your readers that quick win. Some options you can offer are:

- Topic prompts or calendars to encourage new writers to start
- A list of essential tools of your trade (either digital or physical)
- Recorded audiobook samples
- Checklists or how-to guides for getting started on their own masterpieces

SHOW, NOT TELL

Make sure your website (and social media) have good visuals. At very minimum, include a photograph of yourself because people buy from people.

When Debra mentioned including personality shots in her media kit, she meant a photograph of you in your environment—the writer at her desk or gardener in the field—not just a stagnant headshot. If you offer garden coaching, make sure there's a photo of you with a client actually in the garden.

Consider setting up a small windowsill studio or corner of your bedroom with good

light, so that you can stage the tools of your trade. A writer can always showcase a laptop, your favorite notebook or the coffee that fuels you. We're lucky as gardeners always to have interesting tools and flowers to photograph. If you have that studio ready to go, you can grab a quick snapshot of your tomato harvest without the hassle of getting everything set up and hiding the clutter each time.

Our readers crave authenticity. With the easy availability of the cameras in our pockets, take the time to craft a good image to complement what you're writing.

TELL, NOT SHOW

My final piece of advice is to make sure your web content is properly annotated and also mobile-accessible. Google is getting smarter daily and is looking for digital clues to make sure your content answers the questions being asked.

Start with your topic and determine what other keywords are suggested. Related and long-tail keywords used as subtitles will help your content get discovered. Ensure you complete the Alt-tag information for each image to carefully describe the image for screen readers.

If you produce video content, make sure you include detailed descriptions so that a viewer knows that at timestamp 2:22, you will start talking about the two drip-irrigation emitters you need for your setup this year.

Take the time to implement a captioning system. YouTube is getting even better at

Debra Also Recommends:

- A personality shot or three
- An author bio
- Contact information
- A sell-sheet for retailers
- Photos of the book cover / page layouts
- The book jacket copy
- A book excerpt or author reading
- A video explaining your journey and book preview
- Some FAQs or interview question prompts and answers
- Testimonials or pre-publication reviews
- A link to where to get your book

automatically adding text to your videos, or hire a teen to install a captioning app and transcribe it for you.

It's time to ignore that relentless pace of creating social media content and return to your roots. Customers are spending more time online, craving authentic engagement and instructions for what to do with their newfound time. Build your solid foundation so that when your audience needs to learn more, you'll be there with the answers they seek. Become their personal hero. 🌸

Grace Hensley, Regional Director of Region 6, serves on several GardenComm committees and teaches about photography and other topics.



GARDENCOMM
VIRTUAL
conference
SUMMER 2021 • AUGUST 11-14
Garden Communications in Changing Times

Eva Monheim: Artist, Teacher, Tree-hugger



When I wrote to **Eva Monheim**, deep into the pandemic's winter surge, I told her I wanted to write an article about her for *On the QT* and she asked, "Why would you want to do that?"

I am glad I persisted because her story is an interesting one—she's an artist, a former florist, an educator and now produces a new podcast, *Plant a Trillion Trees*.

Eva was one of very few people to get a dual degree from Penn State in Horticulture and Art. Having grown up in a household filled with paintings, her first love was art, but her early and deep experiences with farming and gardening also shaped her.

"My mom regularly put up 200 jars of tomatoes and 200 to 300 hundred jars of peaches a season. She was June Cleaver on steroids. My father said, 'You're never going to make money as an artist, but you'll never go hungry as a horticulturist.'"

ENVIRONMENT RICH IN HORTICULTURE

Eva spent a lot of time with her Aunt Helen in a kind of kid exchange with her mom. "Aunt Helen and her family came over to the U.S. and the first thing they did was buy a farm, finally settling in Prospect Hill (Pennsylvania). It was nothing for me to hop on the tractor with my uncle and drive around with him plowing the field or planting. It's something that I just love—being outside, being with nature. I love everything about it."

She reminds me that the Philadelphia area used to be the epicenter of greenhouse production in the U.S., before the oil embargo of the 1970s when it shifted to Denver, Canada and the Netherlands. "There were fields of gladioli on the way home from the (New Jersey) shore and then fields of dahlias and then asters. They grew all that locally. They had big irrigation systems and in the early morning hours we would hear the sprinklers going off and the evenings on the way back home, we could buy pots of gladiolus beside the road for peanuts."

Her passion for plants was nurtured by incredible mentors at Penn State, including

Richard Craig, who was the first to use a nuclear reactor to create mutations in seeds. We can thank him for many of the African violet varieties we have today, as well as the seed varieties of zonal geraniums.

From that rich horticultural environment, Eva became the first female sales rep for the flower wholesaler SS Pennock. Not long after, she started her own florist business, working first with her sister and then her husband, but after 12 years, Eva was ready to move on.

FROM FLORIST TO FOREST

Her first teaching gig was at Delaware Valley College and from there she went on to Temple University, first as an adjunct and then as an assistant professor. In 1997 she decided to go back to school with the encouragement of her daughter. At Arcadia University she won a scholarship that allowed her to also do research and study at the University of Reading, England. "My professor at the time was Indian and he was writing about Salman Rushdie, so I got to meet Rushdie during the time he was under the fatwa. It was hard coming back to the States. Even though I had a family and children, I didn't want to leave."

After receiving her Master of Arts in English Literature, she did an internship at The Pennsylvania Horticulture Society in the publications department and then at The American Horticulture Society in Virginia. That's when she realized there was not much in the magazines about trees. She passed the first time she took the International Society of Arboriculture certification test.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Eva was then tapped to run the education program for the counties, teaching classes of up to 100 people on tree planting and maintenance techniques. Eventually she became the president of the Southeast Pennsylvania Community Tree Association.

Eva's work touched not only the environmental community but also the professional gardening circle. While at Temple University, she and four other professors from across the U.S. were asked to revamp the professional



Eva Monheim hasn't missed a GardenComm meeting since she joined.

gardening program at Longwood Gardens. Their work helped remake the program into the coveted position it is now.

Eva was also one of the first to embrace online learning at Temple and the flexibility the Internet provided. "I had people in the military who took my Fundamentals of Horticulture class so they could graduate. I remember one student who was on a submarine for a top-secret mission and could only speak to me or be online when he was above water!"

WRITING GROUP LED TO GARDENCOMM

After joining a writing group at college, Eva connected with GWA (now GardenComm). "At the time, the organization was filled with editors and writers for all the major magazines. I became friends with Ralph Snodgrass and Jim Wilson BEFORE *The Victory Garden*."

In 2003 while working for Garden Media Group, she attended her first GardenComm Symposium in Chicago. "I was representing Knock-Out® Roses and Endless Summer® hydrangeas and it was held outside Chicago in Evanston Illinois, near Ball Horticulture, one

— Continues on page 13

of our big clients. I decided that I was going to attend every GardenComm conference going forward and haven't missed one since."

Eva doesn't mince words about the future of education, post-pandemic. "I see a complete dismantling of our education system as we know it. Universities will no longer be ivory towers—they can't be. Interdisciplinary skills will be critical because people don't keep jobs for a lifetime. COVID-19 is rewriting

the culture, how we think, how we move through the landscape.

"For me, I am not sure what I am going to do next. This is a bit of a transition time in my life, and I think that is really healthy. There's always been a period of uncertainty."

For now, Eva is still painting, podcasting, teaching, and challenging herself, hoping to realize another childhood dream of becoming a fabric designer.

Learn more about Eva and view her brilliant artworks here: www.evamonheim.com. You can also find her coaching gardeners and professionals alike here: www.verdanteartheducators.com. And listen to her podcast at <https://anchor.fm/plantatrilliontrees> 🌿

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.

THANK YOU 2021 CONFERENCE SPONSORS!



| | |
|--|--|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

GardenComm thanks **Brent and Becky Heath** of Brent and Becky's Bulbs for their continued support for our organization, including a sponsorship for conferences and for several virtual education programs.

Becky Heath is the immediate Past President of GardenComm. She and her team worked to develop the Williamsburg meetings, which twice have been cancelled. Becky rolls off of the Executive Committee in August. We will miss her... but knowing Becky, she will speak up when things need to be said.

Thank you Becky, Brent, and your company for your support of GardenComm.



Above: Becky works the GardenComm booth at the 2019 MANTS show.

Below: Brent Heath has given several talks for GardenComm's education programs.



Submitted photo

Photo courtesy of BrentandBecky'sBulbs.com



Two First-place Awards for Blackstone

Cris Blackstone, Region 1 Regional Director and member of the Sustainability Committee, won two first-place awards from the National Federation of Press Women (NFPW At-Large) for her entries. First place went to "You DO Want Ants at Your Picnic," about the role ants play in our ecosystems, written for the New Hampshire Landscape Association. She also won first place in photography for a photo accompanying her article "Creating Pollinator Habitats in Our Own Front Yards, also for the New Hampshire Landscape Association.



NFPW was founded in 1937 by 39 women who met in Chicago to advance professional standards of press women as one of their goals. NFPW work also includes advocacy for the First Amendment and freedom of information.

On the QT wins National Award

The National Federation of Press Women recognized the May-June 2020 issue of *On the QT* with a first-place national award.

That issue focused on how members were adapting their businesses to challenging times, what COVID-19 resources were available for freelancers and small businesses, and how to access them.



"I'm so pleased to bring this honor to GardenComm's newsletter," said editor **Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp**. This is the third year *On the QT* has been recognized by NFPW. In 2019 it placed first for a 2018 issue, and last year it placed second for a 2019 issue.

Cathy Wilkinson Barash is the copyeditor and **Paul Wilson** is the graphic designer.



Jo Ellen's personal *Hoosier Gardener* Newsletter placed third nationally.

Oster Garners Silver Seal Award

The Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania presented **Doug Oster** the Silver Seal Award during the club's virtual convention, Zooming into Spring.

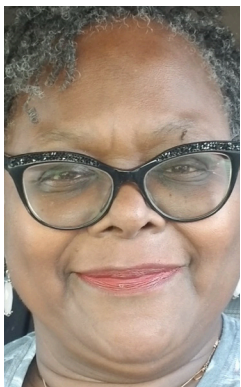
The honor is awarded to an individual, organization or institution (other than garden club members) and recognizes special contributions toward the advancement of the work of garden clubs. The GCFP has 119 garden clubs with 4,800 members across Pennsylvania.

"This is a nice surprise, as you can imagine. I love working with garden clubs," Doug said. "I'm very excited to receive this honor. Thanks to the members for choosing me for the award."



Speight Joins NGC Project

Teri Speight has accepted a position with National Garden Clubs Board of Directors for the 2021-2023 term, Plant America-Play Outdoors. Her focus will be on urban gardening.



New Book from Roman

Kim Roman, of Square Foot Gardening 4 U, said her book, *Ultimate Guide to Indoor Gardening* (Fox Chapel Publishing, September 21, 2021) is available for pre-order on Amazon and Barnes & Noble. The book teaches readers



of all experience levels how to successfully grow vegetables and herbs indoors using a variety of methods, even in a very small space. An on-demand video class will be available at www.sfg4u.com.

Spencer Guests on "Seed Chat"

The Urban Farm and The Great American Seed Up present "Seed Chat," a free monthly virtual seed-saving class and live Q&A, usually the third Tuesday of the month at 5 p.m. MT. Greg Peterson and Bill McDorman cover topics concerning seeds and food-growing, with **Kari Spencer** as a frequent guest. For registration information, go to <https://greatamericanseedup.org/events/seed-chat-2021-05/>.

August 28 is the date for "Seed Up Saturday," a free virtual workshop, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., PT. Kari and others will cover breeding your own varieties, harvesting wild seeds, planting wildflower gardens, plant patents, and landrace gardening (topics may vary.) To register, go to SeedUpSaturday.com.

Houzz Honors SHE

Teresa Watkins' Sustainable Horticultural Environments of Orlando, Florida (SHE), has won a 2021 "Best Of Houzz" award for "Customer Service" from the leading platform for home renovation and design. For the sixth year running, the Central Florida landscape design company was chosen by millions of homeowners from among more than 2.5 million active home building, remodeling and design industry professionals. 🌿

