

On the



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**GARDENCOMM**  
Garden Communicators International



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

# How to Write Google-friendly Stories

BY RANDY SCHULTZ

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Let's say you're a professional writer. You know how to craft a great sentence. You know how to write a great opening paragraph to introduce your topic and hook your readers. You've been writing for years, and you know what you're doing. And the great thing about writing is, the basic fundamentals never change. Right? Wrong. The writing world changed when Google became the proverbial 800-pound gorilla of online content.

When I launched [HomeGardenandHomestead.com](https://HomeGardenandHomestead.com) three years ago, I had never written a story specifically for online publication. So, the first stories I wrote were just like the print-oriented stories I had been writing for years.

That quickly changed thanks to WordPress, an open-source website creation platform that is arguably the easiest and most popular website builder. One of the great things about WordPress is its built-in SEO (Search Engine Optimization) tools. Because Home, Garden and Homestead is a WordPress-based website, I learned A LOT about how to write an SEO-optimized story.

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# Conference Deemed a Success



I hope that you are enjoying the fall, one of my favorite seasons. Corn mazes, Halloween, Thanksgiving planning and holiday decorating are on my mind, but I would be remiss not to share details about the summer's main GardenComm activity, the Annual Virtual Conference.

## ALL ABOUT THE RESULTS

- 35% rated the overall conference Excellent, 40% noted it was Very Good.
- 80% ranked the Education Sessions as their favorite part of the conference, followed by the Virtual International Garden Tours, the Expo/Sponsor Booth Networking, the What's New Preview and the GardenComm Lounge.
- Over 80% were very satisfied, satisfied or neutral about the technology. This is a number we will work on improving for future virtual programs.

## HOW DID THE CONFERENCE INFLUENCE ATTENDEE'S PERSPECTIVE OF GARDENCOMM?

- "Boosted my view as it being a more professional organization that is serious about providing value to its members," **Debby Ward**, Prior Unity Garden
- "Made me realize how valuable my membership in this organization is," **Jennifer Petritz**, Wake Robin Garden
- "I felt more connected and had a lot more fun than the previous virtual event," **Toni Gattone**
- "The leaders think well on their feet; it is great access to successful authors. The industry obviously is in transition, between member ages, changes in media/platforms/profit centers," **Suzanne Thompson**

## MORE FROM YOUR COLLEAGUES DIRECTLY

- "The educational sessions were wonderful! The networking simply can't be beat. Connecting with other plant geeks from around the world gives inspiration and energy like nothing else. We get each other and that is important. The outside world just fades away. I simply cannot say enough great things about the GardenComm Virtual Conference," **Sheri Ann Richerson**
- "The members who attended GardenComm were universally gracious and positive in the chats, eager to make connections and swap tips. I came away from the education sessions and drop-in meetings with a notepad full of ideas I could implement right away. GardenComm isn't just for writers; as a coach, designer and one-woman marketing department, it's been a terrific resource for me," **Amy Mullen**, Lead Designer and Plant Geek, Spotts Garden Service
- "This year's virtual conference was the best of its type that I have experienced in this pandemic year. Excellent job of varying the program and connecting the digital platform with a new way to visit a trade show. Congratulations!," **Kirk Brown**
- "GardenComm is an incredible, worldwide community of garden writers, speakers, artists and growers—whether on paper, online or on the ground. Collectively we have thousands of years of experience we are eager and passionate to share," **Caileen Viscoff**, Ontario, Canada
- "Even virtually because of the pandemic, some of my most useful education sessions ever occurred in 2021. The new story slam served to better acquaint me with fellow GardenComm members, since we could not convene in person," **Mariana Greene**
- "If you're a garden writer or write for the green industry, you can't go wrong with GardenComm. You'll have multiple ways to meet new people, learn from others, and share your gifts as well!" **Wendy Komanchek**

— Continues on page 4

# It Takes a Community



"If you build it, he will come." That is the well-known quote from the iconic movie *Field of Dreams*. In fact, this year is the 30th anniversary of the baseball classic. What does

baseball or a movie have to do with GardenComm? Good question. Bear with me. There is a point—or two—I promise.

For those who may not have seen this movie, Kevin Costner's title character Ray Kinsella hears that quote and proceeds to build a baseball diamond in his Iowa cornfield. When the field is built, former baseball greats appear, coming out of the surrounding cornfield to play ball on his field. The real story is that one of those players is his father. The whole reason behind building the field is so that father and son get a second chance to know and appreciate each other.

Another plot in the movie is that Kevin's character and his family have fallen on hard times. They need to raise money so they don't lose the family farm. As the camera pans away from father and son playing catch, a long line of cars as far as you can see comes in to view, headed to the family farm and baseball field, presumably to pay for the chance to watch players from yesteryear.

## COME TOGETHER

The point is that in order to save the farm it took family, friends and strangers as well as some faith and commitment. Like the farm, we have our work cut out for us in regards to our organization. And just like the father and son in the film, if you're estranged and no longer a member, we hope you'll give GardenComm a second chance.

GardenComm is not unlike many associations that are working to stay relevant and be financially stable. And just like a winning baseball team, success does not happen overnight. Nor does it happen because of one person, but of many—from the staff to the management team, the players, stadium vendors, workers and those who attend the games. But it does eventually happen when a common goal is shared and everyone gives their all.

Call me a dreamer if you want, but then again, I'm from Cleveland, also known in the

sports world as BelieveLand! And I believe in GardenComm and its ability to provide an opportunity for garden communicators to network and grow their skills.

## RAVES FOR THE CONFERENCE

Did you attend the Virtual Conference in August? If you did, thank you! I'm glad you found it a useful investment in your professional future. If you didn't attend, you still have the opportunity to purchase select talks or the entire event through our website. We built upon what we learned from our first virtual conference in 2020 and thanks to additional members stepping up to the plate and bringing forth new ideas, it was a successful team effort. We received rave reviews like this [Virtual GardenComm Conference was So Good, I have to Eat my Words - GardenRant](#) by **Susan Harris**.

I'm hopeful 2022 will bring about more in-person events. We look forward to gatherings at MANTS in Baltimore, Maryland, in January and Cultivate'22 in Columbus, Ohio, next July. We have plans for continuing virtual events to help us stay connected, network and to provide outstanding educational opportunities. Programs like the upcoming workshop ["Author! Author!" Tales and Tips to Navigate the Publishing Process, from Proposal to Print to Publicity](#) (which also includes the recording of "How to Self-Publish Your Book" by **Carol Michel** as a bonus) and ["What's New Preview, Part II"](#) (with the recording of Part I from the conference).

Additionally, due to popular demand, we're planning a virtual event next fall. As we look further down the road, we've already started discussing our 75th anniversary, which happens in 2023.

## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Although I'm looking forward, I can't help but look behind me. In 2001 I became the first female president of the Ohio Nursery and Landscape Association since its inception in 1908. In my inaugural speech as incoming president, I paraphrased a famous quote by President John F. Kennedy. I said, "Ask not what your organization can do for you; ask what you can do for your organization."

As such, I'm asking you to help create a stronger and more vibrant GardenComm.

How? Volunteer for a committee. I can guarantee from my own experience you will get back more than you give. Some committees are more active than others so you can find something to fit your availability. At the very least, please help us spread the word on social media; like and share our events to your followers and contacts to broaden our sphere of influence. Recommend GardenComm to budding communicators or those who don't even realize they are communicators.

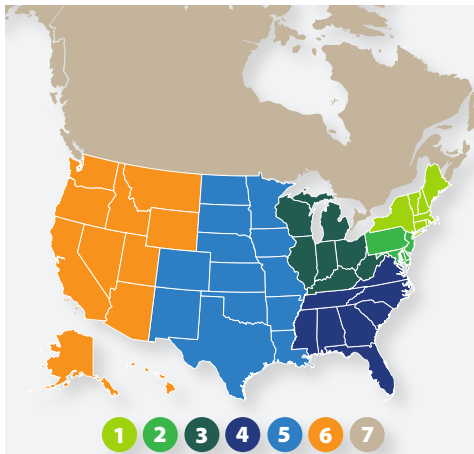
Thank you for being members. Thank you to those considering joining our organization. If I can be of any assistance, reach out to me at [maria@upshoothort.com](mailto:maria@upshoothort.com).

Maria Zampini



## 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).



## MEMBER NEWS

**Kim Roman** (Region 4) will teach two online continuing education classes through Anne Arundel Community College, “Square Foot Gardening—The Basics” is an online two-night, four-hour class that covers 10 basics and eight steps to creating a wonderful small-space garden, following the principles of the time-honored SFG method. The first class runs from 6 to 8 p.m. on October 5.

Roman, of Square Foot Gardening 4 U, will speak at the [Maryland Home & Garden Fall Show](#), October 15 through 17.

She will also present “Fall & Winter Veggie Gardening,” which teaches gardeners of all skill levels how to extend their vegetable gardens without a greenhouse, no matter what small-space gardening method they currently use, 6 to 8 p.m., October 27.

**Ellen Zachos** (Region 5) will speak about “Growing Beautiful, Healthy Houseplants!” via Zoom at the San Diego Home/Garden Show, 2 p.m., October 24.



**Mary-Kate Mackey** won GardenComm’s first Story Slam contest and picked up \$250, donated by C.L. Fornari.

— Executive Director’s Message, continued from page 2

- “GardenComm is where garden communicators come together to grow and share their craft. This group of professionals is welcoming and always looking to what we can be doing better and what is coming. As a garden communicator, I really get a lot of information and inspiration from the educational sessions and as an exhibitor, I have an audience that is excited to engage, network, and trial, and give feedback on our products. After a few years, this group has really started to feel like family to me,” **April Shelton**

## CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE STILL AVAILABLE

If you haven’t purchased the full conference recording yet, you still have time because it will be available through Oct 31. [Click here](#). The full conference package includes 19 recordings—14 education sessions and 5 enrichment sessions plus handouts for just \$199 for members (\$10 per) and \$269 for non-members (\$14 per). Non-members will also receive a GardenComm membership with full benefits through the end of 2021.

Each education session is [available for purchase](#) at \$20 for members, \$30 for non-members. All education sessions were rated at a minimum of 8 out of 10 for relevance, quality of speaker and overall presentation so you can’t go wrong with any of these, *but* the best deal is the full conference package.

One of the highest rated sessions, as usual, was the What’s New Preview, Part I with **Diane Blazek** from the National Garden Bureau. Diane presented new plant varieties and garden products from their members. The reveal continues in Part II taking place 7 to 8 p.m. ET, November 10. [Registration is just \\$25](#).

Registrants for Part II will receive the recorded version of Part I, which took place August 12 at the 2021 Virtual Conference. Registered attendees from the 2021 Virtual Conference will automatically be registered for this session.

## MORE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

On October 19, just a few weeks before the What’s New Preview Part II, GardenComm presents a four-part, one-day workshop called “Author! Author!” Navigating the Publishing Process, from Proposal to Print to Publicity.

Join publishing pros **Maria Zampini** (UpShoot LLC, author and GardenComm President), **Jessica Walliser** (Cool Springs Press Editorial Director and author), **Karen Chapman** (author and garden designer) and Michael Madison (law professor) in this half-day workshop to learn how to turn your idea into a book you’ll be proud to promote. Our experts will discuss the best practices to make your publishing dream a reality, and how to avoid mistakes and missteps when writing a book.

Register by September 20 for the best pricing,” \$59 for members and \$99 for nonmembers. Learn more and [register here](#). All sessions will be recorded and provided to registered attendees.

As we move further into fall and winter, I hope you will consider participation in all the above programs. The recordings will be the perfect break from your winter garden prep such as cutting your perennials, collecting and trading seeds, protecting your plants from frost and bringing your herbs indoors.

Be well and keep warm.

All the best,

**Marla Schrager**

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## GOOGLE-FRIENDLY STORIES START WITH KEYWORDS

Google searches are all about keywords. Those are the words you type into the Google search bar to find what you're looking for. Keywords are actually a phrase that's typically three to five words long—commonly called a keyphrase.

Google loves it when your keyword phrase is in your headline and in the url of the website page where the story is posted. And here's where Google starts influencing how you write. Google loves it when your entire keyphrase is in the first sentence of a story. Word for word.

This is not the traditional way most of us write stories. In fact, when I have contracted with GardenComm members to write stories for Home, Garden and Homestead, I have NEVER received a story with an SEO-friendly keyword headline that's repeated in the first sentence. For those of you who have written stories for me, that's why I always revise with your first paragraph. Or rewrite it entirely.

## DUMB IT DOWN FOR GOOGLE

Google assumes we are all idiots with a fourth grade reading level. So, you must really dumb it down to get a Good SEO ranking using the WordPress SEO tools.

Google loves subheads. If your story goes for more than 300 words without a new subhead, Google dings the story's SEO rating. Google loves subheads that contain your keyphrase. But not in every subhead. You get penalized for too many subheads with the keyphrase. So, make sure it's in about half of the subheads.

And speaking of keyphrases, Google wants the keyphrase to appear in your story more often than would be acceptable in non-SEO writing. To keep Google happy, repeat the keyphrase about once every 150 words.

Google also loves short sentences. It penalizes a story if it has too many sentences of more than 20 words. You'll be surprised by how many of your sentences are too long—by Google standards.

## GOOD WRITING VS. SEO WRITING

Most of us don't write Google-friendly stories. But our stories are more engaging. They are more fun to read. They are written for smarter readers. And they have a whole lot more personality.

So, I am not suggesting that you change every story you write. What I am suggesting is, when you are paid to write for an online publication like mine, do an SEO edit. Shorten your sentences. Use more subheads. And don't be afraid to repeat what you think is your keyphrase. I might change your keyphrase using Google Adwords (which could be the subject of another story). But I will appreciate your use of a keyphrase because it shows that you understand the difference between traditional writing and online writing.

HomeGardenandHomestead.com, like many websites and blogs created by GardenComm members, depends upon its SEO scores and Google search results to generate traffic. So, please don't take it personally when online editors revise your stories. We are doing

it so we can survive in the Google-dominated online world.

## ONE MORE THING

For the record, this story is not completely SEO optimized. I failed to repeat the keyphrase from the headline in the first sentence. Or even in the first paragraph. But I did use subheads, and I consciously wrote short sentences. You can, too!

**Randy Schultz** is the Founder and Content Editor of [HomeGardenandHomestead.com](http://HomeGardenandHomestead.com), which has won two GardenComm Gold Media Awards for Best Garden Website. Randy is also President of Schultz Communications, a marketing company that promotes plants, seeds and garden products. He serves as Regional Director for Region 5. 🌱



- learn more -



# Sustainable Stormwater Management Key to Clean Water



During large rain events, communities need to manage great amounts of rainwater. Traditionally, stormwater management systems were aimed to drain the landscape as quickly as possible. Run off flows from roofs, lawns and driveways into storm drains and then to the nearest body of water.

This system relies on gray infrastructure—human-engineered water and wastewater treatment plants, pipelines and reservoirs—to prevent flooding. With this system much rainwater is wasted as it flows into waterways, carrying pollutants and topsoil along with it. The primary concern was to limit nuisance and potentially damaging flooding. The environmental impacts of such practices were not considered.

Today's green infrastructure is designed to capture, infiltrate, cleanse and detain rainfall close to where it falls in the landscape. The Iowa Stormwater Education Partnership is based on this—implementing appropriate methods in a water treatment train that makes water cleaner and safer before it leaves the site.

The sustainable approach to natural landscape preservation, conservation of water resources and stormwater management allows more stormwater to infiltrate the ground and re-charge groundwater supplies.

## KEEP WATER WHERE IT FALLS

On residential properties, conservation practices to keep water where it falls and soil from washing away begin with soil quality restoration, native landscaping, green roofs, rainwater harvesting and rain gardens.

Commercial and municipal properties and residential developments use additional green infrastructure, such as permeable pavers, bioswales, infiltration trenches and basins, filter boxes (with rechargeable filters), infiltration and retention (hold water permanently) basins and constructed wetlands.



Infiltration trench construction



Mature hedge: indigo bush, hazelnut, meadowsweet, elderberry, and high bush cranberry.

The photos are used by permission from Judy Joyce, Impact7G, an environmental company in Iowa that helps clients make informed decisions for sustainable solutions. They show an infiltration trench in a stormwater wetland, during construction and five years later.

— Continues on page 6

The bioswale used in commercial and municipal properties is a vegetated channel that conveys water. It has an engineered soil subgrade and a subsurface drain. An infiltration trench stores water before it infiltrates through an amended or engineered soil.

These larger projects, often city or county

stormwater runoff quality and stormwater reduction become important new goals.

Many resources guide the watershed planning process. These include local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. State universities' flood centers, local water basin



Planting native shrubs on the surface of the infiltration trench

based, begin with a definition of a local watershed. This is the land area that drains or sheds to a low point in the landscape such as a body of water, a river, lake, or wetland. The water passes through many jurisdictional boundaries, creating a diversity of land-use and ownership, a challenge when forming policy on land use plans. These projects fall under the category of flood plain management and hazard (flooding) mitigation. As the area of impervious surfaces (in paved and developed areas) increases in a watershed, more rainfall is converted to runoff.

### CONCERNS ABOUT WATER RUNOFF

Awareness of the damaging effects stormwater runoff has on water quality and aquatic life in streams is a relatively recent development. Previously, stormwater management has been a flood control rather than a quality control program. Local governments now intending to improve the quality of their runoff-impacted streams are incorporating best management practices into their stormwater programs. With new stormwater regulations,

coordinators, engineers, landscape architects and native vegetation specialists all need to work together. Community groups, landowners and businesses can also have a great interest and take action to improve the health of the landscape.

### MITIGATION PLAN

In Iowa, the [Coralville Resilient Action Plan](#) addresses real flood impacts by providing a model that can be used for preparing communities on the implementation of a hazard mitigation plan.

Another good resource for sustainable watershed management is the Environmental Protection Agency webpage on [water topics](#), which includes links to green stormwater management and sustainable water infrastructure.

As a community member, homeowners can assess proposed green infrastructure projects to maximize public health benefits and serve all populations. Not the least is improved aesthetics and opportunities to be outdoors that will contribute to the overall health and well being of everyone.

Stormwater management brings many benefits to municipalities. The size of city and county stormwater projects can overwhelm residents when attempting to learn about and understand the process. Becoming familiar with a wide range of best management practices for sustainable stormwater management that include the capturing, infiltration, cleansing and detaining of rainfall close to where it lands on the landscape is a great place to start. Understanding green infrastructure shows us how these types of projects use sustainability planning on a large scale and also that these important ideas can be scaled down and applied to our home garden as well. 🌿

### RESOURCES;

U.S. Environment Protection Agency (EPA)

<https://www.epa.gov/water-research/healthy-benefits-green-infrastructure-communities-fact-sheet>

Federal Emergency Management Agency

(FEMA) <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/risk-management/hazard-mitigation-planning/create-hazard-plan>

Iowa Stormwater Education Partnership (ISEP)

<https://iowastormwater.org/green-infrastructure/>

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Stormwater Manual (ISSWMM) <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Environmental-Protection/Water-Quality/NPDES-Storm-Water/Storm-Water-Manual>

California Stormwater Quality Association

(CASQA) <https://www.casqa.org>

Arizona, City of Flagstaff Stormwater Management Design Manual

<https://www.flagstaff.az.gov/DocumentCenter/View/58133/SWMgmtDesignManual-3-09?bidId=>

**Judy Nauseef** is a landscape designer, freelance writer, and speaker. She specializes in sustainability, including native plants, habitat gardens and prairie designs. Judy holds certifications from the Iowa Nursery and Landscape Association and the Association of Professional Landscape Designers where she is a fellow. At APLD Judy has served in many roles including president and serves now on the sustainability committee. As a member of GardenComm, Judy serves on the membership and sustainability committees. She is the author of *Gardening with Native Plants in the Upper Midwest: Bringing the Tallgrass Prairie Home*. You can find her blog and newsletters on [Judy's website](#).

# Whether It's *Jardin* or Garden, Larry Hodgson Has Seen Most of Them



Garden writer Larry Hodgson lives outside Quebec City, Canada – USDA Hardiness Zone 3 in climate terms, Arctic conditions for many of us south of the 49th parallel.

During our Zoom call (how else would we communicate in the COVID age?), I noticed that his fireplace had been converted to a terrarium of sorts, filled with tropical plants under lights—a bit of greenery to help with the long Canadian winters.

Larry has lectured and led garden tours internationally since the 1980s, but COVID-19 put the brakes on his travel and lecturing schedule. He recalled, “All 10 of my garden tours were cancelled and of the 70 lectures scheduled for 2020, only a handful switched to Zoom.”

He adapted to the new normal by writing. “Garden centers closed in May because they had nothing left to sell. This stimulated gardening magazines, both in print and online to ask for a lot more content,” he said. One publication alone asked him for 17 articles.

Like many of us, working from home allowed him to devote time to his garden. For Larry, that meant he could finally win his war against the groundhogs and plant a lot more vegetables, but it went deeper than that. “The pandemic changed my way of thinking. I didn’t want to go back to lecturing outside the house anymore, I just like it too much here.”

## INTEREST IN HORT STARTED YOUNG

Larry was born on a farm not too far from Toronto, but he and his family moved to the city while he was still young and spent many summers visiting his uncle’s farm. “You could open the door and let me out and I would be gone till lunchtime. I could spend an hour watching caterpillars and brought home all kinds of stuff I found, including dead rats. I was fascinated by nature.

“My father was a traumatized city dweller. He always wanted to be a farmer. When his farm went bankrupt and they lost everything,



**Former GardenComm President Larry Hodgson even has houseplants in his fireplace.**



Submitted photos

he never got over that, but he made up for it with gardening.” Larry’s father created a huge vegetable garden, planted apple and other fruit trees and had big beds filled with flowers. Larry was the eldest, but all his siblings were gardening from a young age.

“We each had a spot in the vegetable garden just for us. I remember my father teaching my sister how to plant beans; she must have been about 3 years old.” It was soon obvious that Larry was the one that truly shared his father’s passion for plants. “My father would say ‘Larry wants to go to the garden center,’ or ‘we need to stop and visit this garden for Larry,’ and the rest of the family would roll their eyes.”

## THE LURE OF THE BIG CITY

On a trip to Quebec City as a 12-year-old, Larry decided he was going to live there. “It was the most beautiful place I had ever seen, and I got it into my head that I wanted to study in French.” At 19 he moved there as a

student at La Valle University to study languages. Now he writes in French and English and really doesn’t have a preference. “I just write.”

Larry is a self-taught gardener; he admits that the lack of professional horticultural training never came up, even by the people hiring him to write. “I always wanted to write a book on gardening. I just wanted to share. I borrowed a typewriter and wrote like crazy every lunchtime. Eventually I quit my day job. Everyone thought I was crazy, but I just felt I had to write, and I did. We had two really hard years but by the end of the second year I was making a living writing and I have made a living as a free-lance writer ever since.”

One of his first gigs was for the local newspaper, writing seven articles for a special gardening section but was told emphatically that they did not want a garden column. “I had never written a newspaper article, but before the seven articles were up I had a gardening

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column!" He has written for the paper now for 40 years, losing his job once due to cost cutting, but was quickly brought back due to reader complaints.

### LOVE OF WRITING

Last year seven of the 10 most-read articles had his byline on them. Larry's blog and website, [The Laid-Back Gardener](#) is a bit of misnomer. He is a prolific writer and gardener, having authored more than 60 books in English and French, including the bestselling *House Plants for Dummies*. He has been a contributor for numerous magazines, including *Organic Gardening*, *Fine Gardening* and *Plantes et Fleurs*. He also writes a daily blog, which has thousands of subscribers internationally. "I just dive in, do my research, add my own knowledge and just write. I like to write. Give me the space and I will write. In school when I had an essay format exam, that was my forte. I covered the front, back and even the margins of the page. I can't help myself."

Having been a GardenComm member since the 1980s and a Past President, Larry has seen the evolution of the organization over the decades. What started as a kind of "boys club" was ultimately brought into the 21st century with the hiring of Kellen Company. He doesn't see a lot of difference between Canadian and American gardeners. "When I go to garden communicator meetings, we talk and enjoy a lot of the same things. I basically write for the

Northeast gardener and that covers everything from Virginia to Minnesota."

### MISINFORMATION IS A CONCERN

With the proliferation of online sources of gardening information, Larry is concerned about how much misinformation is out there. "In some ways we have taken a huge step backwards, as a lot of things that had been cleared up and that gardeners understood as not being good gardening, are all back again." One example he sites is about terrariums, which have exploded in popularity and have reignited the debate about whether you need a drainage layer. Larry feels that was settled decades ago, the answer in his experience is a definitive "no."

Larry also believes that COVID-19 has changed people in fundamental ways. "It's not just about gardening, it's a whole new mindset. People's worlds have become smaller, more intimate. People are getting comfortable with doing things where they live, and gardening is a part of that. A lot of people will keep gardening because it has become a part of them." 🌱

**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

**Tuesday, October 19**

3:00-6:45 p.m. ET

#### "Author! Author!" Navigating the Publishing Process, from Proposal to Print to Publicity

Join publishing pros **Maria Zampini** (UpShoot LLC and author), **Jessica Walliser** (Cool Springs Press Editorial Director and author), **Karen Chapman** (author and garden designer) and Michael Madison (law professor) in this half-day workshop to learn how to turn your idea into a book you'll be proud to promote. Our experts will discuss the best practices to make your publishing dream a reality—and how to avoid mistakes and missteps when writing a book.

**Wednesday, November 10, 2021**

7 – 8 p.m. ET, \$25 members and guests\*

#### "What's New Preview Part II" (plus Part I recording)

National Garden Bureau (NGB) has been presenting new plant varieties and garden products from their members for almost 40 years. This year promises to be better than ever with new introductions because of the surge in members who create those products. Even without traveling, you will be one of the first communicators to see and hear about these new items because of the special connection NGB provides with their breeder and manufacturer members. **Diane Blazek**, Executive Director of NGB, combines both live goods and hard goods in two separate and different sessions (you'll need to see both to get the full array!)

\*Registrants for Part II will receive the recorded version of Part I, which took place August 12 at the 2021 Virtual Conference. Links will be in the Part II receipt once payment is processed for Part II. Registered attendees to the 2021 Virtual Conference will automatically be registered for this session.

## 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)

# Welcome

## New GardenComm Members

**Catherine E. Bollinger** • (919) 219-4361  
piedmontgardener@gmail.com  
Pittsboro, NC

**Jim Crowder** • (901) 233-5444  
plantdoctor@msn.com  
Memphis, TN

**Karen England** • (760) 214-3685  
k-england@cox.net  
Vista, CA

**Irvin Etienne** • (513) 405-9383  
irvin.etienne@gmail.com  
Arlington, IN

**Stacey Evers** • (703) 346-8530  
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**Dave Hanson** • (204) 801-2652  
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**Kathleen Hennessy** • (952) 224-2939  
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**Jacqueline Karsten**  
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**Frédérique Lavoipierre** • (707) 327-9746  
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**Lois I. Miklas** • (717) 201-3215  
lim2@psu.edu  
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**Linda Pilgrim** • (413) 923-1178  
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**Daryl Pulis** • (770) 475-2493  
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**Debbie Rea** • (708) 289-4434  
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SheriAnnRicherson@exoticgardening.com  
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**Dania Rivera**  
daniarivera22@gmail.com  
Vega Alta, PR

**Barbara J. Sullivan** • (910) 762-9462  
bjsullivan1966@gmail.com  
Wilmington, NC

**Claire Sullivan** • (705) 931-2928  
clarified2000@yahoo.com  
Peterborough, Ontario

**Jean Thomas** • (518) 833-2827  
jeanthepipper@yahoo.com  
Freehold NY



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

### ONE MEMBER

Helen Andrew  
Cathy Wilkinson Barash  
Marie Butler  
Natalie Carmolli  
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

### TWO MEMBERS

Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp  
Maria Zampini



Helen Battersby



Jenny Rose Carey



Perla Sofia Curbelo



Toni Gattone



Phyllis Gricus



Carolyn Hestand Kennedy



Denise Schreiber



Teresa Watkins



Barbara Wise

## ELECTION RESULTS

We are proud to announce the 2021 GardenComm election results the term for these officers shall begin after the announcement of their election during the 2021 virtual conference in August.

Thank you to all the candidates who ran for an office and congratulations to all those who will be taking the reins in August. Our organization depends on and appreciates volunteers like you.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President – Maria Zampini  
Vice President - C.L. Fornari  
Treasurer - Denise Schreiber  
Secretary - Kathy Jentz  
Immediate Past President–Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp

### NATIONAL DIRECTORS

Region 2 - Jenny Rose Carey  
Region 4 - Barbara Wise  
Region 7 – Helen Battersby

### REGIONAL DIRECTORS

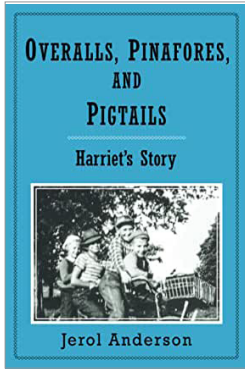
Region 1 - Charlie Nardoizzi  
Region 2 - Phyllis Gricus  
Region 3 - Alicia Rittenhouse  
Region 4 - Teresa Watkins  
Region 5 South - Carolyn Hestand Kennedy  
Region 6 South - Toni Gattone  
Region 7- Perla Sofia Curbelo



## JEROL ANDERSON

*Overalls, Pinafores, And Pigtails: Harriet's Story*

Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing  
264 Pages, paperback \$15.99  
Published January 2021



### Jerol Anderson

penned *Overalls, Pinafores, and Pigtails* as a biographical story of Harriet, growing up and learning to become a true tobacco farmer by the time she was a teen. But she still attended a one-

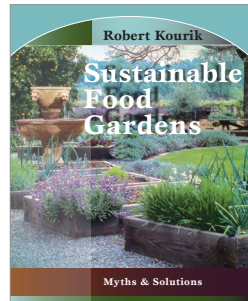
room schoolhouse with 29 children ages 6 to 14, learned to work on cars and cuss with her older brother, celebrated holidays with family and her churchgoing community and was known by all who lived nearby as —that little

girl riding by on her bike in overalls and flying pigtails.

## ROBERT KOURIK

*Sustainable Food Gardens, Myths and Solutions*

Metamorphic Press,  
486 full-color pages, 450 illustrations,  
and a 4000-word Index, softcover, \$69.95  
To be published in December, 2021



**Robert Kourik's** *Sustainable Food Gardens* is, first of all, a compendium of horticultural wisdom acquired by Kourik in his 36 years as a professional organic gardener and

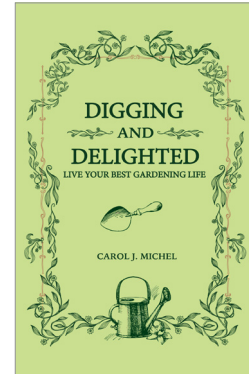
landscaper. It's a treasure trove of relevant information (from controlled studies and peer-reviewed scientific literature worldwide) that either supports or disproves many of the common myths and teaching influencing today's gardeners. The book is packed with how-to information based on Kourik's experience and backed by his scientific research. A fascinating, enlightening and useful book for both beginning and experienced gardeners and landscapers.

## CAROL J. MICHEL

*Digging and Delighted: Live Your Best Gardening Life*

Gardenangelist Books  
120 pages, softcover \$14.99, hardback \$24.99

Published August 2021



*Digging and Delighted: Live Your Best Gardening Life* by **Carol J. Michel** is her latest book of essays on gardening, this time with advice for every gardener, from new gardeners who are just realizing seeds work to experi-

enced gardeners who enjoy zone-pushing and pushing the gardening envelope. Carol, an award-winning author, explained that she wanted this book, her fifth in what is becoming a series of gardening essay books, to be a book of handy advice that every gardener would want to read at least once every gardening season. As with her other books, Carol sprinkles her advice and gardening wisdom with a liberal dose of humor. 🌱

# Leah Penniman Receives Green Medal Sustainability Award

## BY DEBRA KNAPKE



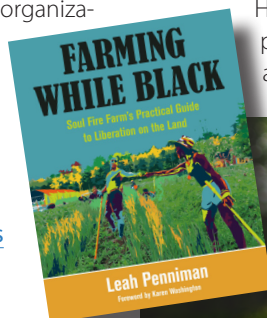
GardenComm's Green Medal Sustainability Award recognizes the accomplishments of individuals or allied organizations dedicated to wise and respectful care of

the Earth, and implementation of sustainable and regenerative practices. The award is open to members and nonmembers ([See past winners](#)). This year the award was presented to Leah Penniman, who describes herself as a Black Kreyol farmer, mother, soil nerd, author and food justice activist. She co-founded Soul Fire Farm in Grafton, New York, in 2010.

Creating food justice, which is fair and equal access to healthy, sustainable and affordable food for all as well as using regenerative farming practices are cornerstones of what Leah has been doing for the last 25 years.

Her experience and reach range from teaching high school to interning at community garden projects to working with farmers in Ghana,

Haiti and Mexico to creating programs that teach youth and adults from diverse backgrounds



to work together to build sustainable food systems.

To document the process and practice of farming, Leah wrote *Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land*. Leah describes her book as "a love song for the earth and her peoples." Others have hailed it as a "roadmap for Black people to return to their rich, land-based heritage" and "a methodical and innovative instruction manual for a sustainable farm practice; and a clear-eyed manifesto that uses the rich history of the Black farming legacy as the guiding ethos for an effective modern day resistance movement."

Visit Leah's websites: and [FARMING WHILE BLACK](#) as well as her social media @soulfire-farm and @farmingwhileblack to learn more about her contributions to the field of sustainable and regenerative farming and the social cause of food justice. [SOUL FIRE FARM](#)

**Debra Knapke** is chair of GardenComm's Sustainability Committee.

# Michael Leach

November 25, 1948 - June 23, 2021



It is with sad hearts that we share the news of [Michael's recent passing](#). He was a dear friend, talented writer, faithful Christian and consummate gardener. For 10 years, we have been writing [heartlandgardening](#) blog together to celebrate the Midwest's seasons of gardening. Along the way, we shared wonderful visits, traveled to gardens and attended garden conferences together. We

also saw Michael courageously fight and win his battle with cancer.

Many times, we sat on Michael's back porch and brainstormed our next round of blog topics. He would make us tea to enjoy as we looked out into his backyard paradise. And he often sent us home with plants or cuttings from his garden. He was our editor and thoughtfully edited our pieces while keeping our voice. He only made our writing better and always encouraged us to write more descriptively.

As a tribute to Michael, we thought we might share a few gems from his inspiring blog posts and essays. [Ed. Note: You can read the entire "[Remembering Michael](#)" online.]

## HIS LOVE OF DAFFODILS

He wrote, "They may lack the regal elegance of lilies and voluptuousness of roses and peonies, but daffodils are the flowers that make my heart leap highest." While in his early 40s, they came to symbolize hope for him. During a dark valley time of life, he shared that a friend gave him a bag of bulbs as a birthday gift. After a tough day of work as an office temp, he came home and planted the bulbs. He wrote, "While digging holes, I thought, 'these symbols of spring will be blooming in a few months. When they do, my life will be as different as the pastel spring scene is from the gray, gloom of late November.'" That April, his daffodils and spirits blossomed together and he continued planting a couple more dozen each fall.

## HIS GARDEN WIT

We appreciated Michael's snarky take on rainy days and winter snows. In "[Spare Me the 'S' Word](#)" he makes fun of forecasters who "can't wait until the world becomes a floured mess." He described Daylight Savings as "the black expanse as vast and forbidding as Siberia." He also made fun of Groundhog Day and suggested "gardeners apparently weren't consulted when groundhogs were chosen as prognosticators of winter's duration," since the creatures chewed up his barn floors and wreaked havoc amongst his vegetables. He even laughed at himself in "[Garden Downsizing](#)" as he wondered how to bid farewell to a jealous lover, his clever metaphor for a beautiful but demanding garden.

## HIS LAST POST

In late March, Michael wrote "[Garden Party for Native Plants](#)" and encouraged readers to add more native plants to their carts when plant shopping this spring. Michael's own yard was filled with redbud trees, dogwoods and sugar maples. We encourage you to plant one of these trees or a handful of daffodils to remember Michael.

— Teresa Woodard and Debra Knapke

# Eleanor Greenwood Powell

July 11, 1930 - May 14, 2021



Eleanor Greenwood Powell passed away on May 14 at the age of 90. She was born to Joseph Gordon Greenwood and Martha Frances King Greenwood on July 11, 1930. She graduated from Mount Airy High School in 1948. At 17, she interned at the *Mount Airy News* and became a full-time writer. After several months, she had "printer's ink" in her blood and remained on staff for 52 years, retiring at the age of 82.

During her career she captured state awards from the NC Working Press Association, the NC State Food and Nutrition program, the NC Lions and others. As the News Lifestyle Editor, she produced the weekly edition of "Surry Scene," wrote a weekly food column as well as the "Annual Holiday Cookbook" and headed the social section that included weddings, engagements, anniversaries, birth announcements and the "happy" parts of the publication. A 20-year member of the Garden Writers of Association of America (now GardenComm), she reported about gardening events and educational seminars that she attended in the United States and Canada.

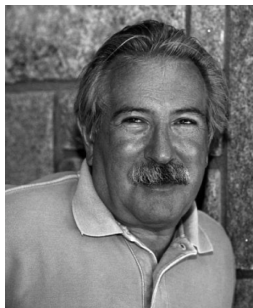
A 60-year charter life member of Modern Gardeners Garden Club, she and Katherine Parries decided in 1955 that they would organize a garden club for young mothers who were interested in gardening and flower arranging. Eleanor served as club president, vice president, and as the chairman of the publicity committee. Eleanor and Katherine planted a plot of marigolds on N. Main Street in Mount Airy the 1970s, an area that is now known as Modern Gardeners Mini Garden. In 2020, the club dedicated a bench in her honor at the Pollinator Garden on South Main Street. Eleanor was appointed by the mayor to the board of the Mount Airy Appearance Commission.

Eleanor was married to Joe "Pete" Powell for 30 years. He was a flight instructor at Piedmont Aviation and was the wholesale manager for Piper Aircraft. He died in 1979 at the age of 52. They traveled to every state, including Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Canada, Mexico, South America, and Europe.

—The Mount Airy News

# Allen Rokach

March 15, 1941 - July 16, 2021



Allen Rokach passed away on July 16, 2021 at the age of 80. It must be karma that his latest USPS Garden Beauty Forever stamp series is now in the post offices across the country. (He had the American Gardens Forever series on U.S. Botanic Gardens in 2020).

I knew Allen as a friend, admired him as a colleague, and learned from him as a mentor and workshop instructor. His

work will long be remembered by those he influenced and the flower photography workshops he led all over the world. The former director of photography and staff photographer for The New York Botanical Garden and co-founder of the Center for Nature Photography, he created the Brooklyn Botanic Garden certificate for Garden Photography. Allen traveled throughout the South as the principle photographer for Southern Living before retiring and traveling with his delightful wife Anne Millman to visit every National Park. "One day" we would work together on a wildflower workshop. Sorry I did not make that happen. Namasté.

— Saxon Holt

With his wife, Anne Millman, Allen co-authored eight books. *Focus on Flowers: Discovering & Photographing Beauty in Gardens & Wild Places* won the 1991 Award of the Year for Photography from the Garden Writers Association of America (now GardenComm) the year he joined the organization. *Focus on Travel: Creating Memorable Photographs of Journeys to New Places* was translated into French. The six-book series *The Center for Nature Photography Field Guide to Photographing Flowers, Landscapes, Trees, Birds, Gardens and Seasons* was translated into Chinese. He also provided the photographs for *Gardens of the Heartland* and *A Three-Year Garden Journal*. In addition, they co-authored innumerable articles on photography, travel, nature and science.

He traveled the world since 1975 on photographic assignments that ranged from the bulb fields of Holland and the antiquities of Egypt to the vast Amazonian rain forest. An expert in location photography best known for his photographs of flowers, gardens and landscapes, Allen's work has spanned everything from public relations and photojournalism to art and sculpture to travel and features about people and the list of clients and publications where his work has appeared reads like a Who's Who. Yet he always had time to give encouragement and advice to people starting out in photography. 🌱

— Cathy Wilkinson Barash



Carol Michel



Maree Gaetani



MaryLynn Mack



Ryan McEnaney



Brent and Becky



Ed Gilman



Beronda L. Montgomery

**FELLOWS:** Carol Michel and Maree Gaetani

## HONORARY MEMBER:

**MaryLynn Mack**, COO, South Coast Botanic Garden & Board President, American Public Gardens Association.

## EMERGENT COMMUNICATOR:

**Ryan McEnaney**, Marketing & Communications Manager, Bailey Nurseries

## WILFRED J. JUNG DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL:

**Brent and Becky's Bulbs**

## CYNTHIA WESTCOTT SCIENTIFIC WRITING AWARD:

**Ed Gilman**, Professor Emeritus, University of Florida  
**Beronda L. Montgomery**, Professor, Michigan State University, and author of *Lessons from Plants* (2021, Harvard University Press)

# Honors & Awards

Eight people received honors during the 2021 GardenComm virtual conference. The honorees were selected by volunteers on the Honors and Awards Committee: **Nan Sterman**, **Melinda Myers**, **Rob Cardillo** and **Deb Wiley**, chaired by **Debra Prinzing**.



## HALL OF FAME:

**Kirk Ryan Brown**

# Seed-Sharing Library Takes Root in Pittsburgh Area



As winter dragged along, stuck inside during the pandemic during another long, boring day scrolling the computer screen, I stumbled onto a photo of a small

seed-sharing library on Twitter. It was a beautifully built, small, wooden enclosure for people to share seeds using the honor system.

Looking at the photo, I experienced an epiphany, thinking the same thing could be done in Pittsburgh. That's the day Doug's Free Seed Shacks were born.

The plan was to get a few of these shacks into the city to help underserved populations get seeds for vegetables and flowers. I scoured the web for ideas, looking at both little seed and book libraries. Most were handcrafted wooden structures, but then I found a picture of an old newspaper sales box used as a book library. The kind you used to put a quarter in, open and get a paper. They would be perfect as they are made to be outside, would keep the seeds dry and were nearly indestructible.

I'd worked for newspapers since 1979 and I figured someone in the business could hook me up with some of those boxes, I figured they were a ton of them in a warehouse somewhere collecting dust. After poking around a little, a friend was able to buy several of the sales boxes for \$15 apiece, with the caveat that the logo of the news organization be covered before displaying the box. The coin mechanism on all but one was removed.

## SOUGHT CO-SPONSORS

I called Erin Hart of Farm to Table of Western Pennsylvania to see if she liked the idea and if she would help sponsor the project. She was thrilled to come on board, and I was relieved to get a little help with materials and seeds. One of the things I love about my job is brainstorming and coming up with fun, creative or useful ideas. The hard part is doing the actual work to bring the concept to life.

After announcing the seed shacks on Facebook, gardeners from all over the country sent me seeds, including [Renee's Garden](#) seed



company. On a story visit to Angora Gardens in White Oak, Pennsylvania, the team there donated seeds. I bought a pound of 'Perpetual Spinach' seed, a type of Swiss chard, my daughter and I spent a couple of hours filling coin envelopes with the seeds. I picked this vegetable because it's easy to grow, can be direct sowed into the garden about any time. There are lots of other interesting and easy-to-grow flowers and vegetable seeds which will be in the seed shacks.

## SUCCESSFUL TRIAL RUN

I'd always thought the seed shacks should be dark green and on a visit to my local hardware store, my friends there showed me how to prep and paint the boxes.

All that was left to do was fill a beta version up with seeds and put it somewhere to see if the concept would work and what should be done to make it better. [Hahn Nursery](#) in Ross, which is only a couple of minutes from my house and often helped me with my "crazy" projects, agreed to let me put the first Doug's Free Seed Shack in place.

As I wrestled the box into the bed of my truck part of a coin mechanism fell out and still had a quarter inside. I felt that was a good omen.

The test version was filled with cool seeds. There was even a secret compartment, that's not so secret, filled with some rare tomato seeds.

I received lots of constructive feedback on the project from Hahn and many gardeners who visited. I encourage the gardeners to seek out the box, get some seeds and let me know what they think. The goal is to get seeds into



the hands of people who would benefit from growing their own food and to beautify their neighborhood.

## SPREAD THROUGHOUT AREA

Since the beta version worked great, I set out to find a home for the boxes. The first went to the Sankofa Village Community Garden and Farms in the Homewood South neighborhood of Pittsburgh. Ayanna Jones, CEO and founder of the space was thrilled to have the seeds for the neighborhood.

Shiloh Farm in the Point Breeze neighborhood of the city got the next box. Eva Barinas is director of farm education and production for Grow Pittsburgh, she also found a home for another box at a community garden in Braddock.

The last box became part of the Perennial Project in Brownsville, about an hour south of Pittsburgh. The revitalization project is using art and gardens to bring the city back to life. Co-founder Laura Patterson, happily put the seed shack in place right downtown. "Getting people to eat healthy, be more conscious about gardening, that's what we want," she said. "We're planting seeds of change, not just with flowers, but now with fruits and veggies."

Urban gardeners have discovered the seed shacks. I headed out in late summer to fill them up with seeds for cool weather crops. I hope these seeds will bring joy in many ways to those who grow them. 🌱

**Doug Oster** is a freelance writer, videographer and photographer.



Photo courtesy Dramm Corporation

Dramm Corporation builds new headquarters and warehouse operation.

## Dramm Begins Construction on New Headquarters

Longtime GardenComm supporter [Dramm Corporation](#) has broken ground on a new headquarters in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. The 98,000 square-foot facility will be Dramm's first newly constructed building. Located in the Manitowoc Industrial Park, it will increase Dramm's warehouse and office space. Additionally, it has the capability for expansion. The company has grown while staying committed to being a family owned- and operated-business, remaining in Manitowoc County. Dramm now has 93 employees and is excited to offer more office and warehouse space.

## Green Circle Growers Expands

[Green Circle Growers](#), a leading producer in the \$18 billion floriculture market and one of the largest greenhouse operations in North America, is announcing its largest physical and employment expansion in the company's 50-plus year history. The growth will result in 250 new jobs and 30 additional acres of greenhouse space at its Oberlin, Ohio, site. One of their brands is Just Add Ice orchids. GardenComm members toured Green Circle Growers during a Regional Meeting a few years ago. 🌱



Photo courtesy Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp

The Houseplant Guru **Lisa Steinkopf** snaps a few photos of Just Add Ice orchids at Green Circle Growers when GardenComm members visited in 2018.

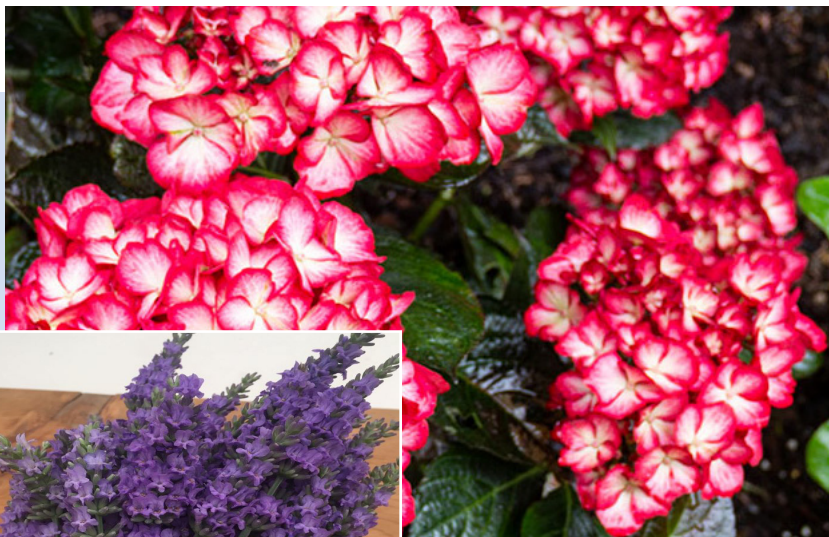


Photo courtesy Bloomin' Easy Plants



Photo courtesy Peace Tree Farm

Peace Tree Farm's Sensational!™ lavender boasts large, thick flowers on sturdy stems. The plant won Best of Show at the 2021 Farwest Trade Show's New Varieties Showcase. Bloomin' Easy's Kimono hydrangea was the People's Choice Award at the 2021 Farwest Trade Show in Oregon.

## Hydrangea and Lavender Garner Farwest Recognition

Out of 74 the entries in [Farwest Trade Show's New Varieties Showcase](#), Lavender Sensational!™ (*Lavandula intermedia* 'Tesseract') was named Best in Show. Lloyd and Candy Traven of [Peace Tree Farm](#) and Richard Grazzini discovered the plant. This is the next step up from Phenomenal lavender, also introduced by Peace Tree Farm. Sensational! has large thick flowers with good branching.

[Bloomin' Easy's](#) Kimono hydrangea was awarded People's Choice Award Best in Show at the 2021 Farwest Trade Show, hosted by the Oregon Association of Nurseries in Portland. Attendees voted for Kimono, a compact, reblooming *Hydrangea macrophylla*, featuring dark foliage topped with stunning blooms of delicate white and pink inside wine-red margins on each floret.



[Garden 365](#) partners GardenComm with the National Garden Bureau to present ideas for articles, promotions, Instagram and other outlets.

We think the following National 'day of, week of and month of' celebrations are fantastic opportunities to help promote gardening. We've curated a list of what we feel are the "best of the best." There is something that will appeal to just about everyone regardless of age or their level of gardening experience. Use this list to plan for your sales, marketing, special events, content calendars and social media posts to educate, have fun and inspire gardeners to get out and get their hands in the dirt.



## OCTOBER

- 4 National Pumpkin Seed Day
- 10 National Cake Decorating Day
- 12 National Gumbo Day
- 14 National Dessert Day
- 17 National Pasta Day
- 21 Sweetest Day
- 22 National Color Day
- 23 National Mole Day
- 24 National Food Day
- 25 National Sourest Day
- 26 National Pumpkin Day
- 28 National Make a Difference Day
- 29 National Cat Day
- 31 Halloween



## NOVEMBER

- 1 National Vinegar Day
- 2 National Men Make Dinner Day
- 5 National Doughnut Day
- 6 National Nachos Day
- 10 National Forget-Me-Not Day
- 11 National Sundae Day
- 13 World Kindness Day
- 14 National Pickle Day and Spicy Guacamole Day
- 17 National Homemade Bread Day
- 18 National Vichyssoise Day
- 22 National Cranberry Relish Day
- 24 Maize Day
- 30 [National Mason Jar Day](#)

## DECEMBER

- 1 National Pie Day
- 5 [World Soil Day](#)
- 6 National Gazpacho Day
- 10 Human Rights Day
- 12 [National Poinsettia Day](#)
- 17 National Maple Syrup Day
- 29 National Pepper Pot (soup) Day

# Members Praise 2021 Virtual Conference

BY CAROL J. MICHEL



The results are in! Over 75% of those who responded to the survey about this year's Virtual Conference rated it Excellent or Very Good. If you attended, what was your favorite part?

Was it the education? We had some fabulous education sessions, which were all recorded so attendees can go back and watch all the sessions they missed.

How about the pitch sessions? We've already heard reports from some members who've gotten new assignments and opportunities after talking to one of the editors during the pitch sessions.

Story Slam? We've had several requests for this fun event to be added to future Annual Conferences.

The Authors Panel? Wasn't it great to hear how authors who published books in 2020 promoted them without in-person events?

## WORLDWIDE TOURS

Garden tours? For the first time ever, we were able to tour five fabulous gardens across the globe. Without breaking a sweat, we went virtually to Australia, Puerto Rico, Italy, Canada and England—via Pennsylvania. Some members would like to make this a more frequent event so they can virtually visit far-flung gardens throughout the year.

Maybe your favorite part was the vendor show? Being able to see new products and plants and interact with the vendors via chat and video allowed us to reconnect with vendors we know and make connections with new vendors. We are grateful to our vendors who made it possible for us to have this conference.

Was it the prizes? By earning points or just by being in the right virtual booth at the right time, attendees had opportunities to win one of dozens of prizes donated by our sponsors.

## LOVED THE LOUNGE

Or maybe your favorite part was The Lounge? In The Lounge, we were able to sit at virtual tables and talk to one another in small groups, just like we used to do when we'd run into each other in the hotel lobby.

And there was more! We were able to meet virtually for our annual business meeting, regional meetings and the honors and media awards presentations. Then to cap it off, we all got together for one last session for a toast to GardenComm featuring cocktails from each region.

## THANKFUL FOR VOLUNTEERS

How did this all happen? There is a long list of GardenComm members who donated time and ideas for this Virtual Conference. And we'll never know how many Kellen staff members pitched in behind the scenes. We are grateful to everyone involved for their efforts to make this a successful conference.

What's next? Since the conference was virtual and we recorded all the sessions, members who wish they had attended can still do so. By paying the conference fee, they will have access to recordings of everything except the vendor show and pitch sessions.

And now we are planning for 2022! If you would like to be part of planning next year's in-person and virtual events—still in the early planning phases—contact any member of the GardenComm Executive Committee or any National or Regional Director.

**Carol J. Michel** is an award-winning author and volunteer on the 2021 GardenComm Virtual Conference Committee. She blogs at [caroljmichel.com](http://caroljmichel.com).

# 2021 Conference Prizes

These are the lucky folks who attended the 2021 GardenComm Virtual Conference and picked up prizes from sponsors and supporters.

## American Meadows

\$100 Gift Card, **Kirk R. Brown**

## Bailey Nurseries

First Editions and Endless Summer plants,

**Camille Werther** and **Debbie Rea**

Bailey Nurseries Plant, **Cauleen Wiscoff**  
and **Charlotte E. Wiggins**

## Ball Horticulture

Branded Gift Pack, **Susan W. Mulvihill**

## Botanical Interests

\$50 gift card, **Jenny Rose Carey**

## Dramm

Bypass Pro Pruner, **Sheri Ann Richerson**

Tripod Impulse Sprinkler, **Sylvia Gordon**

Easy Clean Filter, **Lorraine B. Ballato**

## High Country Gardens

\$100 gift card, **Sean and Allison McManus**

## Iseli Nursery

Gemstone Hinoki Cypress, **Sally**

**Cunningham, Kathy Jentz, Jo Ellen M.**

**Sharp, Kim Roman and Connie Cottingham**

## Proven Winners

Flirty Girls Schizophragma, **Gary Bachman**

Temple of Bloom Heptacodium, **Christopher**

**B. Sheridan**

Legend of the Fall Fothergilla, **Arlene R.**

**Marturano**



## SILVER AND GOLD MEDIA AWARD WINNERS

GardenComm Media Awards is the only national online media awards program for the gardening communications industry. Held annually for more than 20 years, the GardenComm Media Awards recognizes the top professional horticultural communicators in the areas of writing, photography, digital media, broadcast media, publishing and trade. The Gold Media Awards are chosen by the judges as the best from the Silver Award winners. A very special thank you to this year's judges, **Carol Michel** (co-chair), **Ellen Zachos** (co-chair),

**Scott Beuerlein, Steven Biggs, Janet Davis, Joseph De Sciose, Katie Elzer-Peters, C.L. Fornari, Debra Knapke, Sean and Allison McManus, Melinda Myers, Dee Nash, Mary Ann Newcomer, Kelly Norris, Summer Rayne Oakes, Kathleen Purdy, Marty Ross, Jo Ellen Sharp, Lisa Steinkopf, Deb Wiley and Marianne Willburn.**

### SILVER MEDAL WINNERS

#### BROADCAST MEDIA

##### Podcast Series (Overall)

*Slow Flowers Podcast*, **Debra Prinzing**  
*The Native Plant Podcast*, The Native Plant Podcast

##### Radio Program (Talent)

*GardenLine on WXTK*, **C.L. Fornari**

##### Radio Program (Overall)

*The Urban Forestry Radio Show and Podcast*,  
**Susan Poizner**

#### DIGITAL MEDIA

##### Blog (Overall Site)

*Cheaper than Psychotherapy*, Leesa Lawson  
*Savvy Gardening*, **Niki Jabbour, Tara Nolan**  
 and **Jessica Walliser**  
*Plant of the Week*, **Spring Meadow Nursery**,  
**Natalie Carmolli**, Jane Beggs-Joles  
*Home Garden and Homestead*, **Randy Schultz**

##### Video (YouTube, Vimeo) - Single Video

"5 Tips for Growing Panicle Hydrangeas in the South," **Spring Meadow Nursery, Adriana Robinson, Dr. Judson LeCompte**  
 "Chasing Bugs: The Film," **Danae Wolfe**

##### Website (Overall/Commercial)

*Storytelling and Digital Communication in the New Arnold Arboretum*, Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University

##### Website (Overall/Individual)

*Rob Cardillo Photography*, **Rob Cardillo**  
*Orchard People Fruit Tree Care Education*,  
**Susan Poizner**

##### Digital Special Project

*Tour of the Arnold Arboretum*, William (Ned) Friedman, Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University

#### PHOTOGRAPHY

##### Book (General Readership)

*A Year at Brandywine Cottage*, **Rob Cardillo**  
*Chasing Eden*, **Rob Cardillo**

##### Calendar

*Flowers & Gardens 2021*, **Saxon Holt**

##### Consumer Magazine > Magazine (Circulation < 20K)

"Mini Dinosaurs - a Photo Essay," **Bill Johnson**

##### Cover

*GROW* - Spring 2020 Cover, **Rob Cardillo**

#### PUBLISHING/PUBLISHER/PRODUCER

##### Book (General Readership)

*The Conservatory: Gardens Under Glass*, Alan Stein, Nancy Virts, and Princeton Architectural Press  
*Uprooted: A Gardener Reflects on Beginning Again*, **Page Dickey** and Timber Press

##### Book (Technical/Reference)

*Herbaceous Perennial Plants, Fourth Edition*,  
 Stipes Publishing LLC

##### Consumer Magazine > Magazine (Circulation < 20K)

*GROW* - Winter 2020, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society/Blue Root Media  
*Washington Gardener Magazine*, **Kathy Jentz**

##### Newsletter or Brochure

*The Garden Dirt* - Summer 2020 Issue, Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens

#### SPEAKING

##### Live Presentation

"You Can Garden for Life!," **Toni Gattone**  
 "Myths, Lies and All the Latest Dirt,"  
**C.L. Fornari**

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## TRADE

### Catalog

First Editions® Shrubs & Trees 2021 Plants and Marketing Programs, **Bailey Nurseries**

### Special Project

*Slow Flowers Journal-Volume One*, **Debra Prinzing**

## WRITING

### Blog

"Rooting for You" - May, June, and August blog posts, **Mary-Kate Mackey**  
"Susan Harris blog posts at GardenRant.com," **Susan Harris**  
"Toronto Gardens," **Helen Battersby**

### Book (General Readership)

*A History of Zinnias: Flower for the Ages*, **Eric Grissell**  
*Plant Partners: Science-based Companion Planting Strategies for the Vegetable Garden*, **Jessica Walliser**

### Book (Technical/Reference)

*Herbaceous Perennial Plants; A Treatise on their Identification, Culture and Garden Attributes, Fourth Edition*, **Dr. Allan M. Armitage**

### Calendar

*Backyard Foraging*, **Ellen Zachos**  
*Jessica Damiano's 2021 Garden Calendar: 365 Tips & Chores to Keep Your Garden on Track All Year Long*, **Jessica Damiano**

### Consumer Magazine Article > Magazine Article (Circulation < 20K)

"Collector on a Grand Scale: The Horticultural Visions of Henry Francis du Pont," **Carter Wilkie**  
"Mini Dinosaurs - a Photo Essay," **Bill Johnson**  
"Early Bloomers," **Kathy Purdy**  
"Two-Timers: Colchicums," **Kathy Purdy**

### Newspaper Article > Newspaper Article (Circulation > 20K)

"Coronavirus Pandemic Triggers a Wave of Self-Sufficiency in Seattle Area," **Erica Browne Grivas**

### Newspaper Column > Newspaper Column (Circulation < 20K)

"Get Growing", **Erica Browne Grivas**

### Newspaper Column > Newspaper Column (Circulation > 20K)

"Garden Detective," *Newsday*, **Jessica Damiano**

Jeff Lowenfels Weekly Garden Columns, *Anchorage Daily News*, **Jeff Lowenfels**

### Trade > Magazine Article

"A Native Plant Success Story: Finding Rare Bees in Your Garden," **Wendy Brister**

### Trade > Trade Column

"Retail Revival," **C.L. Fornari**

## GOLD MEDAL WINNERS

## DIGITAL MEDIA

### Blog (Overall Site)

*Home Garden and Homestead*, **Randy Schultz**

### Video (YouTube, Vimeo) - Single Video

*Chasing Bugs: The Film*, **Danae Wolfe**

### Website (Overall/Commercial)

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## PHOTOGRAPHY

### Book (General Readership)

*A Year at Brandywine Cottage*, **Rob Cardillo**

## PUBLISHING

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*The Conservatory: Gardens Under Glass*, **Alan Stein and Nancy Virts**, and **Princeton Architectural Press**

### Book (Technical/Reference)

Stipes Publishing LLC, *Herbaceous Perennial Plants*, **Dr. Allan M. Armitage**

### Consumer Magazine > Magazine (Circulation < 20K)

*GROW* - Winter 2020, **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society**, **Blue Root Media**

### Newsletter or Brochure

*The Garden Dirt* - Summer 2020 Issue, **Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens**

## SPEAKING

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"Retail Revival," **C.L. Fornari**

Start gathering your materials now to enter the 2022 GardenComm Media Awards competition. Learn more about the GardenComm Media Awards here.

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