



Friends of the Horticulture Farm

Greetings

From the Friends of the Horticulture Farm

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Happy New Year Everyone!

It's hard to believe it's January with temperatures during the first week of the month reaching 60°F. With this open winter, getting tender plant crowns covered becomes very important. Crowns of plants, such as those of lavenders and heathers, can be damaged by constant freezing and thawing as well as by drying winter winds. A good use for discarded holiday greens and Christmas tree branches is to place them over perennial crowns. The curve of these branches fits naturally over most perennials. And I guess you could say this gives a bit of winter interest in this snow barren landscape.

With the new year upon us, The Friends of the Horticulture Farm is raring to go. The Program Committee has firmed up dates for all kinds of exciting programs for 2007. Just in January and February alone our programs will feature topics like low-cost seed starting and container gardening, and a slide show of beautiful gardens photographed in Quebec this past summer by Joan Fox-Cota and Sarah Kingsley-Richards while on a Friends' sponsored trip. In keeping with our theme of promoting birds, bats, bees and butterflies, The Friends will put on a bird house building workshop in mid-February using pre-cut pieces designed for a variety of bird species whose habitats include the Hort. Farm.

The actual program calendar will be ready soon for you. The Friends hopes you will attend some (or all!) of these programs. I say many thanks to Stephanie Miner and the Program Committee on their dedication to providing informative and interesting programs that enhance the work The Friends do for the Hort. Farm.

The Friends of the Horticulture Farm Board of Directors has decided to change the Friends' fiscal year from a July-June period to the calendar year, January to December, beginning this January (2007). Inside this newsletter is more information. (See below).

The Hort. Farm and The Friends will be getting an enthusiastic plug in a new book due out this coming fall. Its tentative title is Gardening in Vermont, written by Henry Homeyer, a garden writer for the magazine "People, Places and Plants." The book will be geared toward cold season gardening. As a "thank you" from Henry, in this newsletter, is a coupon for \$5.00 off of a yearly subscription to "People, Places and Plants."

So, if the lack of snow is getting you down, come on out and enjoy one of The Friends' upcoming programs.

Keep in touch,
Sarah Salatino
President, The Friends of the Horticulture Farm

**The Friends of the Horticulture
Farm Board of Directors**

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**The Friends of the Horticulture
Farm Newsletter**

A bi-monthly publication of The Friends of the Horticulture Farm. Members of The Friends are always welcome to contribute letters to the editor and articles for this newsletter. Please send your contributions to:

**The Friends of the Horticulture
Farm Newsletter Department
P.O. Box 64788, Burlington,
VT 05406-47884**

or send to:

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2007 Flower Show

The 13th Annual Vermont Flower Show will be held at the Champlain Valley Exposition, Essex Junction, Vermont, on March 9, 10, 11, 2007. Where else in Vermont will you see beds of daffodils, crocus, pots of iris, and a waterfall in March?

This year's event will celebrate how gardens in Vermont embrace both our natural communities (woodlands, wetland, and valley meadows) and our strong cultural heritage. This year's design explores that intersection between wilderness and human culture.

The daily admission will be \$10 Adults, \$7 seniors (60 and over), \$2 Kids (3-12), and \$25 - Three day pass (adults). For more information see: <http://www.vermontflowershow.com/>

The Friends will have a booth at the Show, and if you would like to volunteer with set-up, staffing, or other tasks to make our participation a great success, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator now. Call Stephanie Miner at 863-1876.

Don't Delay! Register for the Master Gardener Course Today!

Registration for 2007 Vermont Master Gardener Basic Course is now underway. This University of Vermont Extension non-credit course is offered at locations throughout Vermont only once each year and fills quickly.

The Friends of the Horticulture Farm is a non-profit, tax-exempt, membership corporation dedicated to the protection, promotion and enhancement of the UVM Horticultural Research Center (the Hort. Farm), its plant collections and, natural areas, for education, research, and public enrichment. The Hort. Farm is located at 65 Green Mountain Drive in South Burlington, Vermont, just off Route 7.

www.friendsofthehortfam.org



It is an intensive, introductory course that covers the fundamentals of home gardening and plant and soil science basics. Training focuses on a variety of horticultural topics such as: botany, landscape design basics, soils, plant diseases, lawns, entomology, invasive plants, and more. University of Vermont faculty and experts within Vermont's horticultural industry teach these classes. Certified Master Gardener volunteers assist students at each classroom.

Students who wish to earn Vermont Certified Master Gardener status are required to fulfill an Internship upon completion of this Basic Course. Interns put their classroom knowledge to work by participating in established Master Gardener projects. Certified Master Gardeners are eligible for advanced gardening workshops and tours to stay up-to-date on horticultural research, learn and practice techniques like garden design, and have the opportunity to network with advanced gardeners, UVM faculty, and industry professionals.

The course is held Tuesday evenings, February 6 to May 8, 2007, from 6:15 to 9:15 pm at Vermont Interactive Television sites in Bennington, Brattleboro, Burlington, Johnson, Lyndon, Middlebury, Montpelier, Newport, Randolph Center, Rutland, Springfield, St. Albans, Waterbury, and White River Jct.

Tuition is \$265 plus an additional \$60 for the training Handbook (required) and all class materials. For registration or information visit:

uvm.edu/mastergardener

Email: master.gardener@uvm.edu or Phone 802-656-9562.

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Email: master.gardener@uvm.edu or Phone 802-656-9562.



The 2007 Perennial Plant of the Year

by Dr. Leonard Perry, Extension Professor, University of Vermont

Each year the Perennial Plant Association, the national industry group of growers and landscapers, votes on a perennial of the year. This is a plant most Association members feel deserves wider use and recognition nationwide. The winner for this year is 'Walker's Low' catmint.

As its name indicates, it is in the mint family with square stems and aromatic leaves. My own experience, and that of others, is that this plant is much less attractive to felines than its relatives. It does, though, contain the chemical nepetalactone which is what is so attractive to cats in the true catnip species *cataria*. It is attractive to other forms of wildlife such as bees and butterflies, but not rabbits and deer to which it is resistant.

The name is deceiving, as this plant is not really low. Rather, it is named for a location where it was found. Mrs. Patricia Taylor found this in an Irish garden in the 1970's, and it was first introduced for sale to gardeners in 1988 by Four Season's Nursery of Norwich, England. This plant can reach about three feet tall and wide when mature, making it one of the larger catmints.

The crinkled, aromatic, silver-green leaves are about one to two inches long, with scalloped edges. The dark bluish-purple flowers are in clusters on upright, arching stems creating a rather open effect reminiscent of cottage gardens. It will begin blooming in May in the south, July in the north, and bloom for much of the season.

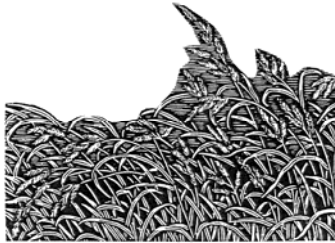
This plant is often thought to be a hybrid between two species *nepetella* x *racemosa*, and is often shown as this hybrid species *xfassenii* which dates back to 1784. Other authorities just list it under one parent *racemosa*. Whatever the true name, these plants originally came from the Caucasus and northern Iran. This indicates they tolerate heat and drought once established.

In fact, this perennial tolerates a range of conditions, and is low maintenance with no serious pest or disease problems. It grows best in a well-drained soil, in full sun. It will tolerate some shade in the south, but in the north it will get taller and bloom less in shade. It will tolerate some salt, so may be a good choice near walks, drives, and roads in the north. It is hardy in USDA zones 4 to 8 (minimum -

30 degrees F), zone 3 if snow.

In the herb garden, this plant combines well with sages, thymes, and silvery plants such as lamb's ears. In the perennial border, place it in the front to middle with such plants as the tickseeds, peonies, pinks, foxgloves, and bearded iris. A classic combination is with roses. Also try combining it with purple-leaved sedums such as 'Vera Jameson', or short grasses such as blue fescues and blue oat grass.

A photo and more details can be found online (<http://pss.uvm.edu/ppp/jan06per.html>)



University of Vermont Scientists Changing the Middle East: Recipient of International Award

by Jack Reeves

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) has announced that The University of Vermont is the recipient of its Innovation Marketplace award for outstanding innovative partnership.

Innovation Marketplace is a competitive program supported by the World Bank, USAID, and other organizations. There were 46 entrants worldwide.

The University's Entomology Research Laboratory submitted its ten-year achievements to manage sunn pest *, done in collaboration with Dr. Mustapha El Bouhssini at the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA).

ICARDA is one of 15 international centers cosponsored by the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, USAID, and donor countries.

Dr. Bruce L. Parker, project leader, and Dr. Margaret Skinner, entomologist, received the honor for the University on Dec. 5 in Washington, D.C. at the Annual Meeting of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, the umbrella agency for the international centers.

They are the People's Choice Award and the Judges' Award, which included a prize of \$30,000.

Parker said, "The University of Vermont's world leadership in sunn pest research is clear. It severely limits production of wheat, a staple essential to feed hungry people. This insect respects no country borders, and our research helps to lessen poverty in a part of the world under heavy siege. The honor and prize recognize the University's achievement."

For more information, contact: Dr. Bruce L. Parker, Bruce.Parker@uvm.edu or Dr. Margaret Skinner, [mskinner@uvm.edu](mailto:miskinner@uvm.edu).

**The sunn pest is one of the most serious pests of wheat and barley in West Asia, where over \$42 million (U.S.) is spent for its control. Yield loss from its damage is commonly estimated at 20-30% in barley and 50-90% in wheat. This insect damages these crops by feeding on leaves, stems and grains. During feeding they also inject chemicals that greatly reduce the baking quality of flour made from damaged wheat. If 2-3% of the grain is damaged, entire lots may be ruined because the flour will be unpalatable and the bread won't rise. Heavy attack causes wheat stems to break before harvest.*

Mark Your Calendar

All activities are held at the Hort Farm unless otherwise specified.

JANUARY

January 20, Saturday
4 – 5:30 p.m.

Flora Exhibit Slide Show

Presenters: Joan Fox-Cota, Sarah Kingsley-Richards, and others from VT Master Gardeners.

FEBRUARY

February 10, Saturday
1 – 3 p.m.

Bird House Building 101

Presenters: Norman Pellett and Kyle Albee.

Help us increase bird nesting at the Hort. Farm by building boxes for a variety of bird species. We will have pre-cut structures available to assemble. Limited to 12 participants. \$15 per person.

February 14, Wednesday
5:30 – 7 p.m.

Shrubs & Vines of Vermont

Presenter: Kate Carter.

Join Ms. Carter for this informative slide presentation. She will be available after the presentation to sign her new book.

February 24, Saturday
10 – 11:30 a.m.

Seed Starting on the Cheap

Presenter: Ron Krupp

This workshop will include a discussion on germination mixes, potting soils, seed starting dates, grow lights vs. sun light, containers, the use of cold-frames, greenhouses and more. Please bring your garden questions. This is a hands-on talk.

February 24, Saturday

Noon – 1 p.m.

Propagating Rhododendrons from Seed

Presenter: Hal Bill

Participants will take home 3 species of rhododendrons. Instructions on how to collect and clean seed as well as how to care for newly sprouted seedlings will be discussed.

MARCH

March 9 – 11, Friday – Sunday

9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

[Vermont Flower Show](#)

March 13, Tuesday

9:30 a.m. – noon

Old Apple Tree Workshop

Terry Bradshaw, UVM Apple Team

How frequently have you needed to revitalize your old apple trees? Here is the opportunity to learn the best methods for such a task.

Branch Out Burlington's Annual Tree Nursery Events at UVM Horticultural Farm

Mark your calendar for these upcoming fun-filled work party dates at the Burlington Community Tree Nursery at the Hort. Farm.

- Tree Lifting (Monday, April 23rd at 5:00 p.m.)
- Nursery Tree Planting (Saturday, May 5th at 9:00 a.m.)

For more information, please contact Cheryl Frank at (802) 656-5434 or cfrank@uvm.edu



Invitation to Hardy Plant Club Program

The Hardy Plant Club is pleased to invite members of The Friends of the Hort Farm to a program presented by Michael Dodge. This event will take place at the Unitarian Church in Montpelier (opposite the Kellogg-Hubbard Library) at 7:00 PM, Wednesday, February 7, 2007.

The subject of Mr. Dodge's talk will be the influence of European gardens on the gardens of the northeast as well as some worthy aspects of European gardens that we might apply to our gardens in Vermont.

Michael Dodge is a published plantsman and distinguished photographer who helped change the face of American horticulture through his long association with White Flower Farm's The Garden Book. Born in England's beautiful Lake District, Michael was educated at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew in London and at the University of Delaware. Michael began his American career at the New York Botanical Garden and, after five years at Henry DuPont's Winterthur Gardens in Delaware, he joined the prestigious White Flower Farm in Litchfield, Connecticut. In his 26 years there, Michael held such positions as Director of Horticulture, Chief Propagator,

Head Grower, New Plant Introductions Manager, Art Director and Primary Photographer for The Garden Book.

Since decisions were made to eliminate employees over the age of 40 and to stop growing their own plants. Michael, like other plantsmen at "The Farm," is now pursuing an independent career. Michael has spent the last 8 years traveling extensively as an assignment photographer for Europe's leading horticultural picture library. He has lectured across the country and most recently rescued, redesigned and restored early 20th century gardens in Bergen County, New Jersey.

Michael moved to Fairfield, Vermont in 2005. He is working on his own 50-acre hillside, perhaps the greatest challenge of his life! He hopes to create a willow and winter plant nursery of hardy and colorful varieties. Michael is still accepting appointments for photography assignments, garden portraiture, lectures, workshops, garden design and horticultural consultations. Beyond the landscape architect's plan, there is always the need for Michael's depth of experience and knowledge as a plantsman as well as his photographer's eye for color, composition and texture into a garden design that really works.



Landscape Design and Gardening Classes Offered

Flynn Designs in Warren, Vermont, in association with The Mad River Garden Center in Waitsfield, Vermont, will offer classes in Landscape Design, Garden Design and Vegetable Gardening. Vermont Certified Horticulturalist Maria Flynn will teach the classes starting in January of 2007 at the Mad River Garden Center located on Route 100 in Waitsfield, Vermont. Classes will be offered multiple dates and at varying times throughout the winter season so as to accommodate varying schedules. Classes are either 2 sessions or 4 sessions and will be limited to 10 people. The cost for the classes will be \$50.00 for two session classes and \$100.00 for four session classes.

The Basic Residential Landscape Design class is a four-session class and will be taught on Tuesdays. The class will be repeated each month from January through March. Students will learn the basic design process to aid them in creating a landscaping plan for their home. The four one-hour sessions will address site measuring and site evaluation/analysis, special relations and circulation, creating garden "rooms" and project implementation. The cost for this class is \$100.00.

The Garden Design class is a two-session class and will be taught twice a month on Wednesdays for the first half of each month and Thursdays for the second half of each month. The classes will be repeated each month from January through March. Students will learn to create gardens with four seasons of interest by combining trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals, bulbs and ornaments. The two one-hour sessions will examine site selection and preparation, plant

selection, plant combinations, garden ornaments and theme gardens. The cost for this class is \$50.00.

The Vegetable Gardening class is a two-session class that will be taught twice a month on Thursdays for the first half of each month and Wednesdays for the second half of each month. The classes will be repeated each month from January through March. Students will learn the many nuances of vegetable gardening in Vermont. The two one-hour sessions will address seed starting, soil preparation, what to plant and when to plant it, harvesting and season extending practices. The cost for this class is \$50.00.

Maria Flynn of Flynn Designs has gardened in Vermont since 1991 and has practiced landscape design in Vermont since 2000. She is a Vermont Certified Horticulturist and member of the Vermont Association of Professional Horticulturists. Her degree in environmental design gives her a strong background in landscape design as well as architecture and urban planning.

For more information and to sign up for classes call or visit the Mad River Garden Center on Route 100 in Waitsfield (802-496-5555) or e-mail classes@flynndesignsvermont.com

DATES/TIMES: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from January through March

January classes: 2:30-3:30 p.m.;

February classes: 4:30-5:30 p.m.;

March classes: 7:00-8:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Mad River Garden Center, Rt. 100, Waitsfield

COST: \$50.00 - \$100.00

REGISTRATION: At the Mad River Garden Center, (802) 496-5555

FURTHER INFO: classes@flynndesignsvermont.com

CONTACT: Maria Flynn, Flynn Designs, 125 Beech Street, Warren, Vermont 05674,

(802) 583-3058; maria@flynndesignsvermont.com

classes@flynndesignsvermont.com

The Amazing Mallows

by Dr. John Craighead, M.D.

Outside of my northern Florida bedroom thrives a robust eight-foot hibiscus now enshrouded with immense, vase-shaped, scarlet blossoms appropriate for the holiday season. It appears to be quite comfortable in an exposed setting, seemingly resistant to occasional frigid wind and rain emanating from the northeast, and impervious to the salt in spray from the nearby Atlantic. Not far away several similar shrubs grow, brilliantly dressed with a spectrum of vivid colors. They are but a few representatives of the legions of hibiscus that adorn landscapes throughout tropical America. These decorative members of the Malvaceae family are exemplars of over a thousand species of mallow distributed worldwide. Think

momentarily of the glorious displays of hollyhock, ancient natives of the Orient, that typify the iconic cottage gardens of the British Isles, but now are increasingly popular carefree, colorful additions to informal landscapes in this country. One of my favorite mallows, a bulky shrub often envisioned to be a small tree, is the Rose of Sharon. Planted individually as specimens, or in rows along paths and roadways, they are adorned with rich color during the drier, hot weeks of late summer. Modern hybridizers have now provided us with varieties having double-flowers, the individual blooms of which display complex arrays of pink, blue, red and white. Although lacking fragrance, and hardiness in the climatic zones of Vermont, these interesting shrubs are a welcome, striking addition to horticultural diversity and are widely planted in the mid-Atlantic states.

During the past summer, I visited a salt marsh on Nantucket island that was populated with white and pink marsh mallows, the volunteer native prototypes of countless herbaceous annual and perennial mallows, several of which have been commercialized for backyard cultivation. Easy to germinate from seed, resistant to insects and foul weather, one or more of these showy members of the mallow family deserve a trial in your garden. Surprisingly, they are often poorly represented in the offerings of some of the more commonly distributed catalogues. Alas, there are downsides to some common native mallows for they can prove to be pesky weeds, defying the gardener's best intentions to eliminate them.

But there is much more to the mallow story than flowering plants for display gardens. Think for a moment of cotton (*Gossypium* spp.), the world's most common source of fabrics. A mallow cultivated economically as long as man has recorded history, it was a widely-planted crop in India before the arrival of Europeans, and a variety of cotton was said to be grown by native Americans before the Spanish discovered the western hemisphere. Few plants have been more involved in the evolution of history than cotton. A major influence on colonization, an important contributor to the industrial revolution, and sadly, a basis for the enslavement of millions whose labor made cotton an inexpensive, commercial product worldwide. Now molecularly-altered cotton has become a touchstone of controversy, as new laboratory-altered cotton varieties provide resistance to cotton's most economically-devastating pest, the boll weevil.

With the appearance of African slaves in the Americas, a stable warm climate, mallow was introduced that soon became an easily cultivated vegetable widely consumed by the poor in the southern United States. Okra, which now typifies the cuisine of the region, is a major constituent of Gumbo, the trademark of Creole cooking. But lest we forget, okra can also be planted as an ornamental. The burgundy variety exhibits rich mahogany leaves and horizontally-oriented, long, conical fruit that is retained indefinitely. Last summer in Hartford, Connecticut's Elizabeth Garden, I discovered a highly decorative formal garden in which large numbers of burgundy okra were planted in geometric configurations accompanied by an ornamental display of celosia and hybrid zinnia. What a uniquely

colorful garden it proved to be!

Who has not relished the delightful flavor of a marshmallow toasted over an open fire? The soft resilient texture of this popular confectionary which was developed by our forefathers in simpler times, is attributable to the chemically-complex mucilaginous constituents of the roots and stems of the common mallow, *Althea officinalis*. Interestingly enough, these same mucins have been extracted from plants by generations of alchemists and healers to formulate emollients for the treatment of a diversity of ailments, a use accounting for the Greek origin of the name *althea* – to heal.

Dave and Tom Take New Jobs!

Rachel Johnson, Dean of the UVM College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and Colleen Armstrong, Greenhouse Facilities Director, are pleased to announce that, effective January 3, 2007, David Heleba and Tom Doubleday will serve as full-time UVM greenhouse staff in the Plant and Animal Biology Facilities Department.

David will assist with the campus greenhouse management and research. He will also manage the Student Greenhouse and Research Cold Greenhouse at the UVM Horticultural Research Center. David's responsibilities will expand to include plant material preparation for courses taught at the greenhouses for both the Plant and Soil Science and Plant Biology Departments. David brings advanced technical and horticultural skills to these facilities.

Tom Doubleday, who has managed the greenhouses at the Entomology Research Laboratory since 1999, will continue to manage the greenhouses at BioResources on Spear Street. Tom will also assist with the campus greenhouse management and research assistance. Tom, has extensive research and commercial greenhouse knowledge.

Over the winter, Dave, Tom and Colleen will learn to manage the three greenhouse facilities as a cross-trained working group. Both Dave and Tom will report to Colleen as their supervisor. They will support UVM faculty and staff with both their academic and research endeavors in 2007 and beyond.

New Fiscal Year started January 1

On January 8, 2007, the Board of Directors of The Friends of the Horticulture Farm met to discuss and act on various items of business related to the operations of The Friends. Of most significance was the passage of a resolution to change the fiscal year of the corporation from July 1 to June 30 to a calendar year of January 1 to December 31. The intent of the Board was to amend the By-laws of The Friends so as to make the change in the fiscal year retroactive to January 1, 2007. The change in fiscal year will not

change the rights and privileges of the members, but it will enable the Board to focus on administrative duties during the quiet winter months and pursue program and project implementation during the "growing season."

PPP Special Subscription

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