

This is the 12th quarterly bulletin. Previous issues can be found on our GCM website: www.gcmct.org. On the front page, click on MEMBER LOGIN. The username is: "member" and the password is: "123123". Click on MEMBER in the header of the next page. Horticulture Bulletins are at the top of the 3rd column.

Rose Exhibit, Lily Exhibit, Daylily Exhibit & More

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill is a wonderful horticultural resource! With 171 acres located in Boylston, Massachusetts, it includes conservatories, formal and naturalistic gardens, walking trails, accessible pathways, expansive views, a café, and garden shop.

Maintaining an irreplaceable collection of plants, providing educational events, and promoting environmental stewardship, the **New England Botanic Garden** engages people of all ages to experience the wonder of plants.

Here are three great flower shows featured at New England Botanic Garden this summer:

New England Rose Society Show & Sale

Saturday, June 17, 2023

Show: 12:30pm - 3:30pm

Sale: 10am - 3:30pm

Lecture: "Easy Rose Growing" 11am - 12pm

Be dazzled by a large, colorful array of cut roses that are judged and awarded ribbons. Learn what makes a prize-winning bloom, as well as tips for easy rose growing and pruning care, plus ask consulting rosarians your questions. The New England Rose Society is affiliated with the American Rose Society. This event is included with General Admission. Purchase tickets online in advance or in person.

New England Lily Society Show & Sale – 2 days

Saturday, July 15, 2023

Show & Sale: 10:30am - 3:30pm

Exhibit Walking Tour: "Criteria for Judging Lilies" 1pm - 1:30pm

Lecture: "Things That Can Go Wrong with Lilies" 2pm - 3pm

Sunday, July 16, 2023

Show & Sale: 10am - 4pm

Exhibit Walking Tour: "Criteria for Judging Lilies" 1pm - 1:30pm

This show exhibits a wide variety of lilies grown in New England, as well as beautiful flower arrangements featuring lilies. Enjoy opportunities to talk with lily enthusiasts who have a wealth of

knowledge about growing and propagating these beautiful plants. This event is included with General Admission. Purchase tickets online in advance or in person.

New England Daylily Society Show & Sale

Saturday, July 22, 2023

Show & Sale: 11am - 3:30pm

Daylilies, true to their name, are known for explosive, short-lived displays. While they add color to New England gardens around mid-July, each individual bloom only lasts for about 24 hours. That makes this exhibit so exciting. Up until the morning of the show, society members don't know which flowers they will bring! Every year, hybridizers introduce the latest new cultivars, adding to the more than 88,000 already-registered varieties. No matter what blooms in the morning, visitors can see an extraordinary array of daylilies highlighting a wide variety of sizes, forms, colors, and patterns. Expert growers will answer your questions. This event is included with General Admission. Purchase tickets online in advance or in person.

* I visited this botanic garden a couple years ago – the conservatory has fascinating plants, and it is delightful to walk around the gardens and grounds. New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill is located at **11 French Drive, Boylston, MA**. See their website for more information: www.nebg.org.

Provided by Denise Forrest

Spotlight on Native Plants

To help promote the Horticulture Committee's theme of *Educating and Encouraging the Use of Native Plants*, this "Spotlight" is a regular feature in our quarterly bulletins. Here are three native plants that bloom in summer and are beneficial to pollinators – one shrub, one perennial for sun, and one perennial for shade.



Ceanothus americanus [New Jersey Tea]

Ceanothus americanus is a low-growing deciduous shrub that is native to Connecticut and Eastern North America [pronounced see-uh-noh-thuhs]. This compact, dense, rounded shrub grows 2 ft to 3 ft tall in full sun to part-shade. Glossy green leaves contrast to numerous clusters of white flowers which are showy and fragrant. Flowers bloom June to July, and they do well cut for arrangements. Grow in

average, well-drained soil [can tolerate dry soil as well]. *Ceanothus americanus* have deep roots that help withstand drought conditions, plus it is a nitrogen-fixing shrub.

Important to pollinators, *Ceanothus americanus* is a great nectar source with special value to native bees, specialist bees, and bumblebees; and it attracts hummingbirds and butterflies. It is the larval host for these butterflies – Spring Azure, Summer Azure, and Mottled Duskywing. This shrub also is considered a “Conservation Biological Control” because it attracts parasitoid insects that prey on pest insects.

Extremely adaptable, use *Ceanothus americanus* in shrub borders, low-growing hedges, native plant gardens; and they are effective in hard-to-grow areas such as dry rocky slopes. Young twig branches are yellow and stand out in the wintery landscape.

Dried leaves of *Ceanothus americanus* were used as a tea substitute in American Revolutionary War times – hence the common name.

Please keep in mind that it is not deer resistant.



Penstemon digitalis [Smooth White Beardtongue]

Penstemon digitalis is native to Connecticut and the Eastern United States. It blooms in full sun May-July in well-drained, medium to dry soil [avoid overly wet conditions]. Clusters of white tubular flowers grow on straight stems 2 ft - 5 ft tall.

The name is derived from the Greek word “penta” meaning five [each flower has 5 stamens, 4 are fertile and 1 is sterile]. Epithet comes from Latin “digitus” meaning finger [flowers look like fingers on a glove]. Common name “beard tongue” refers to a tuft of small hairs on the sterile stamen. These hairs serve an interesting function, forcing bees deeper into the flower, adhering pollen where it will be perfectly aligned to meet the stigma of the next flower.

A pollinator powerhouse – *Penstemon digitalis* attracts butterflies, hummingbirds, many bees, and beneficial insects! As a host plant, it is an essential food plant for the larvae of these butterflies: Chalcidon Checkerspot, Edith’s Checkerspot, Baltimore Checkerspot, and Arachne Checkerspot. A prolific producer of nectar, it supports a huge diversity of butterflies, moths, specialist bees, and bumble bees.

Best suited for sunny borders, native plant gardens, and naturalized areas – *Penstemon digitalis* is excellent in cut flower arrangements as well. In the wild, *Penstemon digitalis* typically grows in fields, meadows, and at the edge of woods. It is drought tolerant and deer resistant.

Seeds ripen in fall, and it is easy to save seeds to propagate in additional locations. Seed heads are enjoyed by birds in fall.

Good native plant companions for *Penstemon digitalis* include *Ceanothus americanus*, *Liatris*, *Baptisia australis*, *Monarda fistulosa*, and *Rudbeckia*.



***Dicentra eximia* [Fringed Bleeding Heart]**

Dicentra eximia is native to Connecticut and Eastern United States. Bright pink heart-shaped flowers, with fern-like gray-green foliage, bloom April - July in shade to part-shade areas. Flowering stops in hot weather and can re-bloom in fall. They grow 12” to 18” tall and prefer moist, humusy soil.

These lovely flowers are best in shaded borders, woodland gardens, naturalized areas, and wildflower gardens.

Dicentra eximia attract hummingbirds, butterflies, and a variety of bees. An interesting note: the double-spur flower petals evolved to specifically encourage bee pollinators. Bees use their legs to pry apart the two outer petals to get the pollen from inside.

The name “*Dicentra*” comes from Greek words which mean two-spurred flowers. “*Eximia*” means distinguished or out-of-the-ordinary. I love this plant and have several in my garden!

Provided by Denise Forrest

Northeast Seed Network

The Need for Native Plant Seed for Our Ecoregion

It is good to know that more and more people recognize the need for native plants. A recent surge in demand for New England native plants has created a shortage of locally adapted seed from sustainably managed sources.

Building a network to meet the need for native plant seeds for our ecoregion, Native Plant Trust along with Ecological Health Network, Botanic Garden of Smith College, Eco59, Highstead Arboretum, Norcross Wildlife Foundation, and the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut are launching the Northeast Seed Network to grow native plants in seed-producing gardens. Seed from these plots will be used in ecological restoration projects and by nurseries to grow plants for sale.

Native Plant Trust will manage the network, supported by funding from private foundations and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Native Plant Trust's nursery at Nasami Farm is expanding seed-processing capacity to serve as the regional seed bank for the network. Staff at Nasami Farm will collect seed sustainably from the wild to establish the seed-producing gardens. The staff also will teach the technical protocols to others who wish to join the network.

Provided by Denise Forrest

Why We Use Botanical Plant Names

We use scientific plant names (or "botanical plant names") to avoid confusion since they are an international language of sorts. But, by and large, the use of the binomial system achieves greater clarity than the use of common plant names.

The Breakdown of a Botanical Name

Genus and species are the two classifications you need to know. The genus is a subset of a family and species is a subset of the genus. Example: *Liatris spicata*.

Capitalization and Format

The genus begins with a capital letter, whereas the species is lower-case. Both are italicized when typed and underlined when hand-written. Example: *Rudbeckia hirta*.

Translated Latin Names

In instances where we translate from Latin to arrive at the common name, we reverse the order of the names, putting the species before the genus. Example: *Solanum dulcamara*. The common name is bittersweet nightshade, but solanum translates to nightshade and dulcamara translates to bittersweet.

Third Names

Sometimes in plant taxonomy, you will see a third name. In such cases, we are simply getting more specific, accounting for variation within a species. Most commonly, this third name indicates a cultivar (cultivated variety); it will appear in single quotation marks and its first letter is capitalized. Example: *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna'

But, sometimes, this third name indicates a variety (naturally occurring variety). A variety name is preceded by the abbreviation, "var." Unless the variety name is a proper noun, its first letter is not

capitalized. But, like the genus name and the species name, the variety name is italicized. Example:
Cornus florida var. rubra

Sometimes you will see spp. It means that the name is referring to several species within the genus.
Example: *Origanum spp.*

Hybrids - When you see a genus name followed by the letter "x," followed, in turn, by a species, this is an indication that the plant is a cross between two different species —a "hybrid plant." Example:
Senecio x. peregrinus

Source: David Beaulieu, *The Spruce* 1/11/22

Submitted by Judy Whitehead

Did You Know – Fun Facts

If you can sit on the ground bare-legged, it's time to plant. For plants to take root and grow, it's important for the soil to be at a certain temperature before planting. For most vegetables, the soil should be between 55 degrees F and 60 degrees F when measured three inches deep. But before the invention of handy gardening implements such as soil thermometers, how was a gardener to know? According to fun folklore, farmers used their bare posteriors to test soil warmth. If they could sit comfortably on the ground, it was time to sow seeds and seedlings. To keep peace in your neighborhood, either use a soil thermometer or wear shorts this season when you test the soil temperature. (Grampa Griswold says May 15th).

Provided by Judy Whitehead

Future Issues

If you would like to submit information for a future Horticulture Bulletin or have a topic you would like us to research, please send them to **SUE KELLEY** at kelleys4@gmail.com.

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