



The Quarterly Newsletter of the Virginia Society of Landscape Designers

Summer 2014 **President's Letter:**

July 2014

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How can it already be the middle of summer?! As I write, the typical early evening thunderstorm is rolling through the valley; maybe this time it will really rain! Yep, it's pouring, halleluiah! Of course, that's because I actually watered today, but

oh well. With the economic forecast slightly better than our weather, hopefully this summer is proving better for your businesses.

Our summer board meeting was held July 16th in Charlottesville at the Dept. of Forestry headquarters. This was our first time meeting here and convenient for some of us "out of towners" with the exception of Jeff and Diane who drove 3+ hours! Thanks to all for attending. We covered many topics starting with the upcoming VNLA summer tour in Blacksburg Aug. 13-15. Please note that VSLD will give 10 CEUs for attending both the Field Day and Summer Tour (Aug. 14-15). We hope to see you there for the excellent speakers, garden, and nursery tours.



The Ellipse Garden @ Dumbarton Oaks

Photo by Katie Sokol

Plans for the Summer Tour 2015 are shaping up with a tentative date set for July 21-23 (Tuesday-Thursday). Pam McGroarty is our committee chair and will be sure to lead us on a great trip to some private gardens in Swarthmore, Pa and tours of Scott Arboretum, Chanticleer Garden, and Mt. Cuba in Delaware. Portions of the tour will be led by Julie Jenney of Scott Arboretum. Mark your calendars for this not-to-be-missed event!!

Our Winter Meeting 2015 is scheduled for Feb. 28, 2015 from 10-2 pm at beautiful Maymont in Richmond.

Some other highlights: Diane Roselius contacted the president of the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs to see how we can connect with that organization and she also followed up by meeting with Bill Smoot, Chairman of VFGC's Landscape Design School. Some of the garden clubs have landscape projects that require installation and we could be a valuable design/build source for them. Coincidentally, the VMFA Fine Arts and Flowers on Nov. 5-9 will be co-hosted by the VFGC. We are bronze sponsors for this event with our organization's name on the promo brochure. For this event, we will also receive 2 tickets to the Gala opening night event and 2 lecture tickets. VSLD cards/brochures can be displayed in the museum during the event. Eve Willis, our show booth coordinator, would like to replace the smaller table top or "science experiment" display with a new pop-up Velcro display at a cost of \$166 which the board unanimously approved. Eve will also be looking for volunteers for the State Fair booth Sept. 26-Oct. 5.

Our website is looking better than ever after some improvements to the home page suggested by Monit. Take a look and while you're there check out some of the archived newsletters in the Members only section. Going back to 2008, one can read about the past tours, shows, and activities. For newer members, it's a good way to learn more about this organization. While attending a garden tour or lecture, think about what you can offer to the newsletter through either photos or articles and receive CEUs for doing a write-up. If you are unsure how many credits you can get, go to our website and under the 'Membership' pull-down menu there's a comprehensive list.

As always, we ask for your suggestions and ideas to help make this organization stronger. Please take time to visit our Facebook page, share your projects, and enjoy the rest of your summer!

Katie

Report from Lewis Ginter

Submitted by Kay Moore

Two things to mention are **The Gillette Forum** on October 23 and 24 and the first **'What's Out There Weekend'** on October 25 and 26 in Virginia, organized by The Cultural Landscape Foundation.

The Gillette Forum will be held at the Kelly Educational Center at Lewis Ginter from 5:30-9 PM on Thursday the 23rd and from 9 AM – 4:15 PM on Friday the 24th. LACES: Thursday: 1.5 HSW hours content and Friday : 6HSW hours content.

Theme and Content:

By examining the critical processes of plant ecology and applying them to landscape and planting design, we inspire a dialogue: about how to responsibly design, install, and manage the environment to mitigate and slow down climate change. The 2013 opening of the New York Botanical Garden's New Native Plant Garden hoisted the ongoing discussion about ecological landscape design and the use of native plants into higher profile. The 2014 Gillette Forum considers how the principles of ecological design create a network of sustainable, ecological, and regenerative landscapes. Over an evening and a day, the three designers of the Native Plant Garden approach the modern expression of ecological landscape design through practice, theory, and science: Sheila Brady, principal architect, Oehme van Sweden & Associates,; Travis Beck, author of Principles of Ecological Design, Director of

Horticulture for the Mt. Cuba Center; and Landscape and Gardens Project Manager at NYBG during the design and construction of the garden; and Thomas Rainer, who worked on the project while at Oehme, van Sweden, and author of the blog [groundeddesign](#).

The Charles F. Gillette Forum on Landscape Design honors the legacy of Charles F. Gillette, a leader in the field of landscape architecture, by engaging the public and the design profession in a conversation about the importance of landscape design and the value of Gillette's ideals of elegance, superb craftsmanship and seamless blending of architecture and garden.

In conjunction with the Garden's Gillette Forum, The Cultural Landscape Foundation's first What's Out There(r) Weekend in Virginia will take place in Richmond on October 25 and 26. "What's Out There" Weekend highlights the nation's rich and diverse landscape heritage through a series of free interpretive tours led by expert guides. The weekend brings to light the unique landscape legacy and local character of Virginia, defined by its publicly accessible parks, gardens, plazas, cemeteries, memorials, and neighborhoods.

Registration for The Gillette Forum opens August 1.

For the 'What's Out There Weekend,' visit <https://tclf.org/event/wotw-richmond>.

Phyllis McLeod Laslett

Adult Education Coordinator, Lewis Ginter

Follow-up on Chris Coen's article on Groundwater Use in Virginia:

The western drought currently in play in the seven western US states within the Colorado River Basin

Watershed has resulted in unprecedented and heretofore unrecognized historic withdrawal by these states of underground water supplies. The groundwater withdrawn over the past nine years [17 trillion gallons] is almost two times the volume held by Lake Mead, the nation's largest water reservoir. A recent scientific study using data from NASA's weather satellites revealed this information and was a surprise to the study's authors. The affected states are Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona and California. As many are aware, no water from the mighty Colorado River now reaches the Gulf of California and legislation is pending to try to change this. More information can be found on this at

<http://www.nasa.gov/press/2014/july/satellite-study-reveals-parched-us-west-using-up-underground-water/#.U9ez4KMcf1E> and at <http://www.weather.com/news/science/environment/nasa-satellite-study-us-west-underground-water-drought-20140725>. Watch the video feed for several reports on western water use and changes underfoot with legislation.



Lagerstroemia indica 'Pink Velour'

by Helen Janele



Solving Social Media

How to gain followers – and what to do once you have them

By Lauren Heartsill Dowdle

The social media hype is higher than ever. You're constantly being told to tweet, post statuses, upload videos and share photos on a dozen different sites – but why? And how can you maximize your efforts to get the most return for your business?

There's no magic bullet to social media success, although there are steps you can take to grow your online presence. To do that, you must first understand why people visit these sites.

"You're dealing with an audience that doesn't want to deal with you," says Marlin Caddell, web developer and social media adviser for Randall-Reilly, *TLC's* publisher. "They get on to read and see funny things. "

So, instead of trying to conduct business, be less formal and more personal. "Think of your page as an extension of you," he says. "Facebook isn't a press release or a business communication. Be a person who is talking directly to other people."

Understanding how to interact on social media is only half of the task – then you need to turn followers into actual clients. "All of your engagement is trying to get people to trust you, your brand and to want to use you for their landscaping needs."

If managed correctly, these sites can help you grow your client base and gain more exposure for your business. Here are tips, techniques and tools to achieve your company's social media goals.

Getting started

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by all of the social media sites out there, but there are two

main ones you should focus on in the beginning.

Facebook is the primary social media site, with Twitter coming in second. "If you focused on those two media channels, you would be covering the vast majority of your audience," Caddell says. "It reaches all age groups, demographics and incomes – it's all across the board."

(If you have the manpower and already mastered these two, consider expanding into YouTube and Google+.)

While there's no charge to join these sites, there's still a time component, so social media isn't exactly free. But, it is a low-cost tool compared to other forms of marketing, such as newspapers and TV ads. And also unlike traditional media channels, these sites allow you interact with your audience. "They let you get directly to people and have them communicate with you," Caddell says.

Make people "like" you

At first, you won't have any followers, so try to attract an audience from other places. Search on Twitter and Facebook for topics such as your city, landscaping, hardscape, lawn maintenance or any other service you offer. Including a hashtag (#) before the word(s) – such as #landscaping – will pull up people who are posting about that topic.

Once you find people and groups that relate to your company, follow or "like" them – and hopefully they will follow you back.

You can even find feeds or chats on Facebook and Twitter to chime in on. Start commenting on other people's sites to expand your audience reach. "To break into it, you have to get into other conversations," Caddell says.

Also, reach out to your current clients, and suggest they follow you on social media if they are happy with your work. To take that a step

further, ask customers if you can share their testimonials and then post what they say along with photos from their projects.

“Let your clients talk about your product, so it isn’t a heavy pitch,” Caddell explains. “The testimonial is one of the best ways to put yourself out there. It’s not you saying, ‘We’re the best.’ It’s other people saying you’re actually good.”

However, don’t expect clients to do this automatically – you have to get the process started. Mark Halla, one of *TLC*’s 2014 Landscaper of the Year finalists and owner of The Mustard Seed Landscaping & Garden Centers, installed iPads in one of his garden centers where customers can like the company’s Facebook page to be entered to win prizes.

Not only do they add their customers as followers, but they also get their page in front of a larger audience. “This helps us reach these people’s friends,” Halla says. “What a great way to capture all of those email addresses – it’s a good marketing tool.” In less than a year, they’ve added about 2,200 new Facebook “likes.”

But remember: It’s not about having 5,000 people who like your page – it’s about having 5,000 people who are willing to promote your business. “You want your followers to use your services or push the services to other people,” Caddell says.

What to post

All of this takes time – so don’t get frustrated if the results aren’t what you expected. “You have to think about social media like a relationship. It’s not just constantly taking,” Caddell explains. “There’s just as much giving as taking.”

So what should you be sharing? Provide entertainment and informational value, instead of trying to pitch or sell people on your

services. “People get on there to see pics of friends and funny stories,” he says. “You don’t have to post photos of cats, but you need to engage the audience.”

For example, post a photo of a patio you just installed and write, “Here’s my latest project.” You can also post photos throughout the project to demonstrate your services and keep people updated on your work. Another type of post that works is introducing your staff with bios and photos.

“At first, just show you’re a knowledgeable person and good company,” he says. “Be more human than you would normally be – don’t be like, ‘I’m a business, buy services from me.’”

Instead, show followers you want to earn their business. You can do this by offering deals, coupons or showing off your project photos.

Once you’ve built that relationship with followers, slowly take it a step further with posts like this: “You’ve seen our testimonials and project photos. Now, if you ever have a landscaping need, I’d love to earn your business. Let me know if you have questions or want a job quote.”

It’s also important to remain consistent with your message delivery on all of your sites, making sure you are staying true to your brand, says Steven Cohen, landscape-snow industry consultant with GreenMark Consulting Group (greenmarkgroup.com) in Richmond, Virginia.

“A successful landscape company understands its competitive essence,” Cohen says. “Deliver your message with a value proposition to attract attention.”

Deal with negativity

As your following grows, it’s just a matter of time until you get a not-so-nice comment. But,

if handled correctly, you can turn this into something positive for your business.

Instead of letting your emotions drive your response, explain how and why you did a project that way in a respectful tone.

“It gives you a chance to show the company listens and that you know what you’re doing,” Caddell says.

Try not to delete comments, unless they are offensive. If a customer has a bad experience with your business, fix it on Facebook where everyone can see the resolution.

To see an infographic on how *TLC*’s readers use social media, visit totallandscapecare.com/how-landscapers-use-social-media. And for more stats and tips, watch “How To Gain Social Media Followers for Your Business” at totallandscapecare.com/social-media-video.

Combine Social Sites

When you’re first getting started, automate your social media posts. On Monday mornings, for example, figure out what you will post for the entire week: before/after project photos, coupons, interesting landscape images, business quotes, customer testimonials or information about your staff.

If you’re only using Facebook, you can schedule posts by clicking the clock image in the box. But once you have several sites to maintain, you might want to turn to a site where you can post to all of them in one place.

On *HootSuite.com*, you can manage up to five media accounts for free and schedule posts on Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, Foursquare, WordPress and Mixi. The site also allows you to see anytime someone mentions your company.

Crack Facebook’s Code

Have you ever wondered how Facebook chooses what posts to run in its newsfeed?

Although they keep their exact formulas a secret, there are a few ways we know increase your odds of being seen.

Adding multimedia elements to a post makes it more likely to end up in someone’s feed. Posting videos, photos, links and regular status updates (ranked from most to least likely to be pulled into the feed) increase your chances.

While uploading a video is your best bet of getting to the newsfeed, don’t worry about editing it. Just record 30 seconds to a minute on your phone of how you do certain tasks. For example, show how you mow a lawn, what makes your business different, something you’re working on or even a funny clip from an office party.

“These videos will give people insight into your business and show you’re personable,” Marlin Caddell says. “It builds your brand and demonstrates you’re not just out for people’s business – you want to entertain them and be a good landscaper.”

Later on if you have the time, you can always improve the quality, but it’s more important to just get videos out there.

Next Level

Once you reach the point when you’ve grown all you can, you can purchase Facebook ads to further extend your reach. “Only do ads as a secondary measure once you’ve hit the upper limit on your organic growth,” Marlin Caddell says. The ads allow you to target your audience based on region, age group, zip code and even interest, so you can make sure you’re reaching your target audience. To learn more about the ads, visit facebook.com/advertising.

What’s More Important than Social Media?

Before you create a Facebook page or post on Twitter, you need to have a functioning website. “You can’t live in 2014 without a

website,” Marlin Caddell says. If someone is looking for a landscape company, even older clients, they will search online – and you need your business to show up.

Your site can have a simple, one-page design with the business name and contact information. “Having a bad website is better than nothing,” Caddell says.

Once you have a page up and running, add bios of you and your staff, project photos, your services and what makes you different from the competition.

For more website resources, including free templates, mistakes to avoid and creating mobile-friendly sites, visit totallandscapecare.com/you-dont-have-a-website.

Social Media By The Numbers

Here’s how *Total Landscape Care*’s readers currently use social media.

Facebook

- 64.5% Access Facebook daily

But, only...

- 54% Have a Facebook page for their business
- 56.9% Post content on their business’s Facebook page once a week or less often

**Based on respondents who have a Facebook page for their business*

For Twitter

- 83% Have a personal Twitter account
- 43.4% Access Twitter daily

But...

- 60.4% Do not have a business Twitter account

**Total Landscape Care conducted the survey from Sept. 11 to Oct. 18, 2013, and 325 landscapers responded. The average respondent age was 50 years old, and the top services offered were lawn maintenance and design/build.*

[Permission to republish in VSLD’s Newsletter given by author]

Crinums for Virginia

[If you only know the old-time granny crinums, then it is definitely time for you to meet the young guys, Crinums for Contemporary Landscapes.]

By Jenks Farmer, Plantsman & Author of [Deep Rooted Wisdom: Skills and Lessons from Generations of Gardeners](#)

I’ve grown crinums my whole gardening life. In public gardens, highway medians, refined perennial borders and even on green roofs, I’m the first to admit that there are way too many selections. Like daylilies or hostas, you just don’t need them all. You only need to know the best - the right one for every situation. And you should know that, contrary to popular belief, crinum lilies can not only be grown in the Deep South, but also into zone 5.

For this article, I’ve picked crinum lilies that will thrive in almost any part of Virginia. In coastal regions, they’re easy. But in the mountains and northern part of the state, you have to know which ones thrive. The key is the same as it is for any planting: know your plants and put the right plant in the right place.

Here are few landscape situations and the right crinum lily for each spot. All of my selections for this article will thrive in zones 5-9.

Perennial Borders

Mix pink crinums with blue salvia or Russian sage for a low maintenance border. *Crinum* ‘Claude Davis’ has solid, rich, pink trumpet shaped flowers. It has proven hardy into northern Ohio (zone 5) where it flowers in late June. Near Farmville, VA, horticulturist David Fowlkes has grown C. ‘Claude Davis’ for years. For David, it flowers in early July. Use it in combination with perennials like amsonia. or annuals like blue salvia or nicotiana. C. ‘Claude’ has a low growing mass of leaves that can anchor, but not overwhelm fine textured plants.

For a pastel pink, try *Crinum* 'Cecil Houdyshel' which I've seen thriving at 2,000 feet in Asheville, NC and near Charleston, WV.



Crinum 'Cecil Houdyshel' flowers more than any other selection.

White flowered, *Crinum powellii alba* thrives into the mid-west and in Washington DC (Henry Mitchell grew it.) In zone 8, it flowers on Father's Day so it's often used as memorial or cemetery plant. It features white flowers in evening light. In fact, all crinum flowers come alive in the late afternoon. Flowers inflate, open and release their fragrance into the evening, making them the perfect cocktail and dinner party plant.

Shady Pathway Texture

Use beautiful, lush, tropical looking, shade loving crinum to line a path. Think of a giant, soft leaved liriopoe or a ginger lily flanking the paths of tropical gardens. *C.* 'Summer Nocturne' and *C. moorowii x americanum* are the smallest leaved, crinums, reaching just 18 inches. *C.* 'J. C. Harvey' and *C.* 'Maiden's Blush' get up to three feet high. All divide rapidly. For planting, we start with small bulbs and 'plug' these in for mass. The caveat is that shade-lovers don't flower a lot.

For even wider foliage, those related to *Crinum jagus* make elegant shade plants for the coast. They'll thrive under live oak trees.



Crinum jagus under a live oak in Charleston, SC.)

Flood Zones/Naturalizing

For retention ponds and drainage ditches with fluctuating water levels, crinums mixed with grasses or sedges thrive. I've used many species in these situations, mixed with sweet grass or spartina. The crinums add a bit of color and textural contrast, too. Many crinums occur along river banks and in flood plains with periodic flooding. Where water stands more constantly, *Crinum bulbispermum* is a natural, though it's also a great border plant - beautiful with fall mums). But be warned; in some literature this is listed as a bog plant. That is incorrect. It **must** dry out occasionally, especially in the coldest parts of winter. The bulbs like to be above the saturation level while the roots will reach down into the muck. Remember, winter wet can be the death of crinums.

Crinum bulbispermum is one of the best to start with. It's incredibly cold hardy.



Crinum bulbispermum Jumbo selection, also known as Orange River Lily, by a pond)

Green Roof

Some crinum lilies are from extremely dry climates like the arid zones of Australia. On a 6,000 square foot green roof in South Carolina, *Crinum* 'Bradley' has been part of a successful mix. On this rooftop, it survived a 2013 winter low of 12 degrees F and 1" of ice. Its short, thin leaves combine easily with grasses. Unlike daffodils or other familiar bulbs that lose their roots in the summer, crinums have long, thick roots that grow and hold soil tight all year long. C.'Bradley', divides readily and makes spreading clumps.



Crinum 'Bradley' in light shade, mixed with grasses.

C. 'Bradley' also thrives as a green roof plant). For roof top plantings, start with small, bare root bulbs.



Crinum 'Meneshune'

Crinum 'Meneshune' matures at 18 inches and thrives in water or dry garden soil. Hardy in zone 8 but makes a great container plant in cooler zones.)

In the wild, crinum lilies range from dwarfs 15" tall to giant 15' tall plants. We have natives while others come from Mexico, Asia, Australia and Africa. There are desert and tropical forest crinums. There are aquatic crinums that are popular aquarium plants. The diversity of their adaptation was illustrated to me once on a short hike in Africa. I saw crinum in flower, baking on massive boulders buffeted by salty ocean winds. Within a mile, I saw forest floor crinum lily on a shady stream bank then waded through fresh water stream where a different species carpeted the stream floor -- three feet below water level.

With this diversity comes a cold hardiness that we've long misunderstood. Traditionally thought of as plants for the South, certain species and hybrids thrive in cities like Pittsburg and St. Louis and rural areas of Indiana and Connecticut. By sending crinum to botanical gardens and plant nuts, I keep in keep in touch with crinum testing and keep a database of these notes. We know that

certain crinum lilies can be successfully grown into zone 5.

Success in cold regions depends on two things. First, selecting the right plants. Certain species impart hardiness and pass that on to their hybrids. Second, properly placing crinum means they can thrive in almost any part of Virginia.



Jenks with Crinum Lilies

Basic Information:

Crinum. Say Cry-num.

Common Name: Milk and Wine, Orange River, Cemetery Lily

Hardiness: Zone 5 and warmer, depending on species.

Where to See Them:

The City of Farmville, VA (zone 6) uses crinum through out. City horticulturist David Fowlkes also has an extensive collection in his personal garden.

Norfolk Botanical Garden, Lewis Ginter, Virginia Zoo, Greenspring Gardens in Annandale, community gardens in Alexandria.

When to Plant: Unlike many perennials, crinums establish best in warm soil. In colder zones, plant in spring and summer. Dividing and moving should also be done in spring or summer. In Zone 8 and warmer you can divide and plant anytime.

Where to Plant: Plant with good drainage and full sun. Though wild crinums thrive in bogs and rivers, in cultivation good winter drainage is essential unless you specifically pick species that tolerate winter wet. Crinums tolerate all soil types. But in heavy clay, holes should be dug out and refilled 6 inches deeper than the base of the bulb.

I often tell people to think of crinums as they would shrubs --- plant for the long term. They take a while to settle in and they're at their best 5 or so years down the road. Deer do eat crinums, but they are a plant far down the list of preferred meals. If pressure is high enough, deer will dine on them.

How to Plant: In decent landscape or garden soil, plant most species 12-18 inches deep. 'Bradley' should be more shallow. In heavy clay, dig out to 8 inches below that, refill and plant to aid in winter drainage. Some people will add rock or broken concrete to the back fill.

In colder zones, plant more deeply. David Fowlkes near Farmville, VA plants mature dry bulbs 24 inches deep in his heavy clay soil. If he's starting with a small bulb, he'll even make a concave dish shaped hole and plant in that - -- allowing him to slowly cover the bulb as the plant grows. In cold zones it's easier and safer to start with big bulbs. This is one reason my company sells flowering size, bare root bulbs generally running about 2 pounds each.

How to Care for Crinum:

Feed them a lot! Our crinum nursery is totally organic. Our bulbs get compost, compost tea and occasion seaweed fertilizer. A spring drench of liquid fertilizer is greatly appreciated.

In the fall, do not cut the leaves off -- leave them in as an insulating, brown mass during winter.

Design Center and many thanks to Yulita Ellis of Ellis Landscape & Garden Designs for pitching in on Saturday. Thanks to Pam's crew for helping with the install.



Jenksfarmer.com specializes in big, bare root bulbs



The VSLD booth.....by Katie Sokol

About the Author:

Jenks Farmer developed and planted two major botanical gardens in South Carolina. He owns an organically managed field nursery specializing in big bulbs and sells both retail and wholesale. Jenks does public and private garden design. Pictures and Plants at <http://www.jenksfarmer.com>. He has a new book named by *Garden and Gun* magazine as the top of the must read garden books for 2014. Its title is Deep Rooted Wisdom; Skills and Stories from Generations of Gardeners and it's published by Timber Press, 2014.

VSLD at the 25th Annual Garden Fair

By Katie Sokol

Our organization was one of 96 exhibitors at the Garden Fair sponsored by the State Arboretum in Boyce on May 9-11. This is a great fair and I urge members to attend next year. We passed out a lot of brochures and met some interesting people. I had a blast working with Pam McGroarty of Landscape

Treasurer's Report
--Susan Kappel--

Budget for 4/1/2014 through 6/30/2014 (Cash Basis)

Beginning Balance March 31				\$14,867.77
Category:	April	May	June	TOTAL
INCOME				
Dues	175	0	0	175
TOTAL INCOME	175	0	0	175
EXPENSES				
Advertising (Business)	1,527.50	0	0	1,527.50
Board Expenses	298.38	0	0	298.38
Gifts & Donations	250	0	0	250
Office Expenses (Business)	0	46.08	0	46.08
Postage and Delivery (Business)	22.98	18.2	0	41.18
Printing and Reproduction (Business)	76.09	122.58	0	198.67
Scholarship Award	500	0	0	500
Winter Meeting Expense	124.57	0	0	124.57
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,799.52	186.86	0	2,986.38
NET TOTAL Income and Expenses	-2,624.52	-186.86	0	-2,811.38
Ending Balance June 30				\$12,056.39

Planting in Dry Shade

by Patty Adkins

Perennial enjoyment of a dry shade garden exists first through a vision set by the designer. This concept consists of a theoretical or mental picture presented, but the sublime substance is finally beheld upon the completed installation. In such manner the garden itself becomes, with the passing of time, a form of much beauty if by *intelligent* design.

Collecting Information

Everything begins with an assessment of the site's conditions. Determine site parameters by acquiring knowledge of the property's

construction history. Then establish soil types, quality of sunlight both daily and seasonally, as well as a basic understanding of property drainage and typical weather patterns which can be expected. These details factor into the predesign considerations. Once these are determined, plant selection and placement begins.

One of the keys to a successful dry shade garden is being familiar with plant materials through experience as well as book knowledge, because *plants don't read books*. And, just because a particular species is fine next door or down the block, does not mean it will thrive under your site's light, moisture and soil conditions. Creating or enhancing an

environment which suits everyone is preferable, but not always easily carried out.

Let's take *Hostas*, for example. A basic understanding of the *species* and parentage of each *cultivar* as it pertains to unique colors and fragrance qualities will go far in allowing you better success when it comes to onsite placement. Most *Hostas* want 'some' sun in order to attain/retain colors and the ability to set flowers and produce fragrance. Additionally, some are more cold hardy, sun tolerant, and heat tolerant than others.



Thus, depending on the *Hosta*, once established, particular cultivars may require *drier conditions*, in order to make an optimal presentation. This familiarity can help define healthy appearance vs. incorrect placement and/or disease state. It can also save time and money when selecting suitable substitutions at the nursery in case of inventory unavailability. The very term *dry shade* can be ambiguous from area to area since all dry shade is not equal. Before starting to propose any planting, certain terms demand definition. First, what type of dry shade exists? Is it an undisturbed woody spot under an established canopy or is it new construction? If the latter, dry shade may be induced as a result of fencing, buildings, or wall construction. New construction usually

means the top soil organic layer has been removed. Or is it a bit of both, but with limited or no irrigation? Either way, many of the plantings utilized within our industry require initial care until plants are established, and some supplemental watering is a must. If we are entering an established system, great care should be taken. Any intrusion into the delicate root zones of either deciduous or evergreens, thus upsetting tricky wet/dry conditions, should incur minimal damage in hopes that the affected plants involved may rebound quickly. So a basic understanding should be of what *dry* and what *shade* means for that particular site. Keep in mind, too, that area moisture and light conditions may greatly change from season to season.

Communicating Information

Establishing communication between parties is sometimes an uncomfortable and rather interesting interim spot. It can be a touchy area where the designer becomes the teacher to the client. Most of us, clients included, have been programmed not only from our early days, but also according to the demands of current culture that dry shade areas are 'ugly and bad' and that in order to become beautiful, they must be totally changed to fit the status-quo plantings of media-driven advertisements. That means the site should be stripped bare of all weeds and replanted in a tiered-type model with evergreen plants and continual blooms. It then requires seasonal spray applications with pesticides and herbicides to further control intruders. Further, it must be irrigated to keep the new plantings alive, fertilized according to calendar dates, and finally hard edged and ringed with turf. Sound familiar? If a suitable opportunity presents itself, I would suggest that it's our job then to go against the flow and propose an area that is maybe less typical, but just as exotic, more water wise and self-sustainable.

Implementation and Ingredients

Much of the time existing beauty does not fit what is being otherwise promoted. Thus, if the

client is willing, and we can subtly educate him/her in such a manner which excites both adventure and wonder, we will be able to present a planting unique to the area and one that is spiced with unusual seasonal cameos. Plants native to the area, or not, may be added with discretion. These can be unique place holders, retaining the viewer's interest from season to season. Once you get approval, the process can be oh so rewarding. So, let's go there.



Dry Shade Garden Plants I Recommend

Shrubs

Aucuba, Berberis, Buxus, Danae, Euonymus, Ilex, Mahonia, Rhipidophyllum, Ruscus, Sabal, Sarcococca, Symphoricarpos, Taxus.

Climbers

Fatshedera [semi-climbing, requires support], Hydrangea anomala, Parthenosissus, Smilax

Perennials

Acanthus, Adiantum, Amorphophallus, Anemone, Arachoides, Arisaema, Arum, Aspidistra, Athyrium, Bergenia, Brunnera, Carex, Corydalis, Dryopteris, Erigeron,

Euphorbia, Galium, Helleborus, Hemerocallis fulva, Heucherella, Heuchera, Hosta, Iris foetidissima, Luzula, Pachysandra procumbens, Phlox, Polystichum, Polygonatum, Pulmonaria, Pteris, Saromatum, Sedum, Selaginella, Tetrapanax, Tricyrtis, Trillium, Rohdea, Viola.

Ground covers

Epimedium, Fragraria, Gaultheria, Galax, Geranium, Lamium, Liriope, Ophiopogon, Oxalis, Pachysandra terminalis, Pentaglottis, Podophyllum, Rubus, Symphytum, Trachystemon, Vinca, Waldsteinia.

Bulbs

Chionodoxa, Crocus, Cyclamen, Eucomis, Galanthus, Lycoris, Narcissus.

Annuals and Biennials

Corydalis, Digitalis, Lunaria.

A Final Note

As the desire for balance and beauty is realized within a dry and shady area, the designer first understands the set rules already present. It's within these constraints that the object of the designer's vision may become a reality. The perfection of this *unique garden* to the soil and its structure. Understanding of and the ability to communicate well to our client the area's constitution will go miles in creating a healthy, low maintenance venue. Thus, great care when planting will allow that disturbance be kept to a minimum. Since the delight we seek is realized only through adequate preparation and process, the end product should strike a balance which is both natural and perfect. As with most gardens, but even more so within the dry shade garden, plant selection serves a definite function in keeping a delicate balance and is, therefore, the key to consistent beauty from year to year within the garden ecosystem.

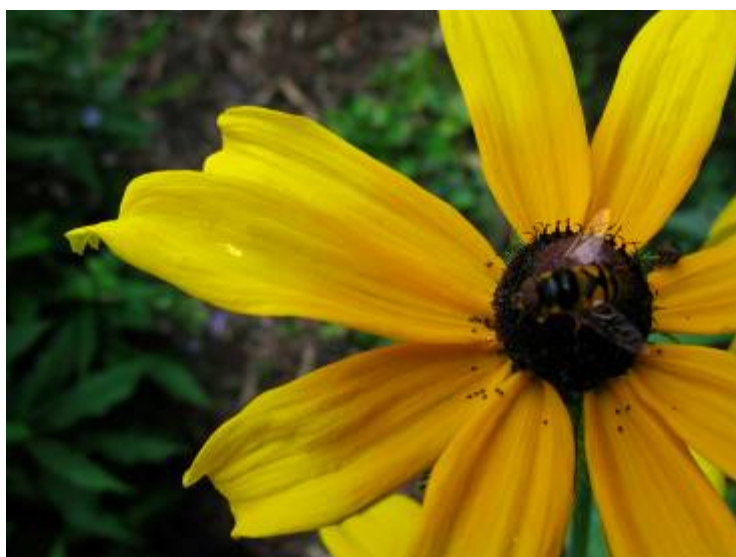
What's All the BUZZ About

Pollinators and How Can We Support Them

by Meg French, Meg French Landscape Design, Virginia Beach

The current conversation is “all about pollinators”. The Senate even established “National Pollinator Week” in 2006 as a way to recognize the important role pollinators play in the health of our large and small ecosystems and agriculture.

Pollinators come to us in obvious and unsuspecting forms. The honey bee first comes to mind, but did you know that the honey bee is not native to our country but was brought over by the European settlers from Europe? Honey bees, as iconic as they are, with their added benefit of making honey, actually pale in pollinating power to the 4,000 species of native bees in our country. Our native bees pack the big, capable punch of pollinating 80% of our flowering plants and 75% of our fruits, nuts and vegetables.



Believe it or not, moths, birds, butterflies, wasps, beetles, flies and bats share important roles in our ecosystem. Large agriculture, habitat loss, urban sprawl, disease and pesticides are all big contributors to the decline

of our pollinators, the ecosystems they support and the pollination process itself.

There is good news though, and that is that we all can make a difference, no matter how large or small our planting area!

Here are a few easy guidelines to help you get started:

*Plant a wide variety of nectar and pollen rich flowers in your garden that will provide a succession of blooms from early spring until fall.



*Lean heavily on choosing from a diverse selection of native plants. The pollinators have co-evolved with these natives and often look to them for specific needs.....whether it's for food, nest building or using as a “host” plant for reproduction.



chives and mint. Annuals such as zinnias, cosmos and sunflowers are also favorites.

Go to:
pollinator.org
butterflysocietyofva.org
vnps.org (The Virginia Native Plant Society)
xerces.org
bringingnaturehome.net

*Plant large groups of the same flower to increase pollination efficiency. This helps the pollinator to transfer pollen to other flowers of the same species instead of wasting the pollen on the flowers of other unreceptive plants.

*Provide shelter in your garden. Pollinators need protection from predators and weather. Leave areas of your gardens that are “messy” to include occasional dried branch piles and areas of bare earth.

*Create a water feature, pond or birdbath that has sloped sides to ensure the pollinators can easily sip without drowning.



Happy Planting.....Happy Pollinators!!!

Preface to following article on Tranlin paper deal:

[Condensation of facts from Kenric Ward's article "Public Pays for McAuliffe's 'Photo Opportunity Fund'" dated June 30, 2014- with permission from the author] by Helen Janele

Headed by Governor Terry McAuliffe, Virginia has launched an aggressive program to attract foreign investors to the Commonwealth through tax breaks and lucrative subsidies from state

* Plant herbs and annuals that are good for pollinators such as fennel, parsley, lavender,

and local governments. This effort has resulted in the creation of the Shandong Tranlin Paper Co., Ltd on 85 acres on the James River near Richmond and a pledge of \$5 million of Va. taxpayers money through the Governor's Opportunity Fund. In return, Tranlin is spending \$2 billion to construct a factory for 2,000 workers (by 2020) to process field "waste" into fertilizer and paper. The Governor's \$5 million lure represents only a token down payment to Tranlin compared to the some \$30 million the Chinese firm is projected to reap over time through federal, state and local tax breaks that includes utilizing the EB-5 federal immigration program which issues green cards to foreign investors.

Currently about \$4 trillion of private wealth is sitting around in China and Chinese individuals are searching for ways to get their assets out of China; "We are at the beginning of a new chapter in the Chinese economy: [the age of outbound private investment](#)," notes Dan Redford, vice president of investor relations at Civitas Capital Group. Last year, China's Shuanghui International Holdings bought Virginia-based Smithfield Foods, American's largest pork producer.

Jerry Peng, the UVA graduate who will head Tranlin. Inc.'s Chesterfield County paper plant, told the Washington Post that it was "very possible" that Tranlin eventually would tap into the federal EB-5 program. At up to \$1 million per investor, EB-5 proceeds can pile up quickly. Foreign-based conglomerates enjoy [additional subsidies](#) if they generate more than half their revenue from outside Virginia, as Tranlin does.

George Mason University's Mercatus Center policy analysts question the value of states waging public bidding wars to lure business. Instead, these analysts argue that low overall taxes produce the best investment environment. "If Virginia is so great, surely no great subsidies are needed to get (companies) here," Lotta Moberg, a Mercatus researcher, told Watchdog.

Virginia farmer tears up Tranlin paper deal



DOWN ON THE FARM: The Tranlin paper deal will damage the land, says Virginia farmer Joel Salatin.

by Kenric Ward | *Watchdog.org Virginia Bureau*
—July 07, 2014

RICHMOND, Va. — A leader in Virginia's "sustainable agriculture" movement says an incoming Chinese paper-and-fertilizer plant is anything but.

And he accuses politicians of squandering tax dollars on the venture.

"To use taxpayer funding to attract a business predicated fundamentally on an anti-ecology premise indicates both political and societal rape of nature's template," Joel Salatin said. Salatin, owner of [Polyface Farms](#) in the Shenandoah Valley, said plans by Tranlin Inc. to convert farm field "waste" into paper and fertilizer go against the grain of long-term land use.

"In a properly functioning agricultural system, wheat straw, peanut hulls and corn fodder would never be a 'waste stream.' Nature intends this carbon to feed the soil on site, either through direct residue application or via compost as livestock bedding," he said. Gov. Terry McAuliffe says Tranlin, which promises to hire 2,000 workers, will help power Virginia's "21st century economy."

Todd Haymore, Virginia secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, calls Tranlin good for the state's farmers.

"Tranlin represents a tremendous opportunity for Virginia's corn and small grain producers by creating a lucrative new market for agricultural residuals that are typically left in the field," Haymore said in a statement.

"Based on the agricultural supply chain opportunities associated with the project, the economic benefit to farmers in this region alone could exceed \$50 million per year."

[As Watchdog reported](#), Tranlin stands to receive at least \$31 million in local and state government subsidies and tax breaks.

Salatin predicts farmers will reap a vicious whirlwind.

"Let's think about this a minute. Nature converts solar energy, on site, into biomass to either digest or decompose proximate to its growth." Stripping off farm field "waste," Salatin said, merely increases the demand for evermore fertilizers.

"The fields generating this alleged carbon waste are being kept productive — for now — with chemical fertilizers produced using astronomical amounts of petroleum," he said. Tranlin aims to produce fertilizer with a "black liquor" cocktail that results from its paper-making process.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Virginia Tech Cooperative Extension say that use of "agricultural residuals" are compatible with Chesapeake Bay farm practices.

Salatin, who has written several books, including ["Everything I Want to Do is Illegal,"](#) contends there's a better way.

"If Virginia farmers would put their money in carbon and composting instead of chemical fertilizers that require military action around the world to maintain cheap oil, we would create far more than 2,000 jobs," the third-generation farmer told Watchdog.org.

Aside from opposition by conservative state Delegate Bob Marshall, politicians from both

major parties effusively support the corporatist hook-up with Tranlin.

Environmentalists from the Sierra Club and the Chesapeake Climate Action Network declined to comment.

Salatin calls the state's buy-in shortsighted and dangerous.

"In a time of alleged vitriolic partisanship, one thing universally unites our political leaders — exporting carbon and depleting Virginia soils," he said.

"That the Chinese company is being subsidized to encourage a soil destructive scheme is both unconscionable and myopic."

Tranlin's designated spokeswoman, Julie Rautio, did not return Watchdog's emails and phone calls seeking comment.

Kenric Ward is a veteran journalist who has worked on three Pulitzer Prize-winning newspapers. A California native, he received a BA from UCLA (Political Science/Phi Beta Kappa) and holds an MBA. He reported and edited at the San Jose Mercury News and the Las Vegas Sun before joining Watchdog.org in 2012 as Virginia Bureau Chief. kenric@watchdogvirginia.org

[Permission to publish given by author to VSLD]

The other day I was thinking...

by Tom Thompson

The other day I was thinking about ways to increase membership in the VSLD and had a few ideas- a couple of which were better than others. So, I brought one up at the last VSLD board meeting. Some on the board liked it; others didn't. They asked me to put my idea in writing for the newsletter. But y'all remember, you voted for me so you're kind of stuck with reading about whatever pops into my head for the next three years. Here it is. I hope you read the whole thing before you make up your mind.

I propose that the VSLD change its way of doing business and allow ALL landscape designers to join without having to go through the certification process WHEN THEY JOIN. I am not proposing that we do away with our Certified Landscape Designer designation- just that we shouldn't make it a requirement for joining the VSLD.

Now before y'all start calling Chris to begin a recall election, let me explain why I make this suggestion. The VSLD, along with every other professional, non-profit organization, is having difficulty retaining members. We're holding steady at around 100 members but we lose, for whatever reason, around 10 members a year. So far, they have been replaced by new ones or old ones who come back, but the most troubling statistic is the number of student members who quit the organization before they ever become certified. I've made a point to ask non-members why they don't/won't join the VSLD. One answer I hear a lot is that they just don't feel confident enough in their abilities to submit a plan for judging. Theresa Biagioli is heading up our mentoring program but that is a member's benefit right now and doesn't solve the problem of bringing in new members. The most common answer I hear is that they don't have the time to compile the membership packet required to become a CLD – they are too busy designing, selling their designs and installing them. Imagine that!

You say – “So what? I'm a Certified Landscape Designer and I have a stamp/embosser to prove it”. Me too, but there are HUNDREDS of competent landscape designers out there who are doing wonderfully without those things. The VSLD needs those people. We need their ideas. We need their skills. We need the influence that having a larger membership could give us. And, having their dues wouldn't hurt either. Some of you are also members of the VNLA; some of you who are VNLA members are probably Virginia Certified Horticulturists. The rest of you probably have heard of the VNLA and the VCH program. The

VCH program is one of the most publicly-(and THAT is important) recognized marketing tools the VNLA has. Becoming a Virginia Certified Horticulturist is NOT A REQUIREMENT FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE VNLA, but if I were to hazard a guess, I suspect that most people who join the VNLA become VCHs. See where I'm going here? Let's get them into the VSLD, THEN let's get them certified.

We all belong to a pretty exclusive club – we are all Certified Landscape Designers. In fact, our club is so exclusive, even our potential CUSTOMERS don't know about us. Don't believe me? Sign up to work the booth at the next event where it's set up and just look at the confusion on people's faces when you try to explain what the VSLD is, much less what it means to be a CLD. I'm proud to have earned the CLD distinction and I'm proud to be a part of the VSLD (again, remember that election last February?). It's a good thing that it is challenging to become a Certified Landscape Designer – it should be something that one must EARN and it should be something that our members WANT to earn to set themselves and their businesses apart. However, being a CLD is not a requirement to being a landscape designer in Virginia, no matter how much some of us might wish it were so. It probably shouldn't be a requirement to become a member of the VSLD either. After all, the name of the organization is the Virginia Society of Landscape Designers, not the Virginia Society of Certified Landscape Designers.

Still having trouble with the idea? Go to the VSLD website and look at the names of all of our CLDs and their businesses. Then, just for kicks, go to yellowpages.com and search for landscape designers in the nearest big city – Richmond, Virginia Beach, Roanoke, Fredericksburg.; There are five pages of landscape designers just in Richmond alone. They are going to continue designing, selling their designs and installing their designs no matter whether they are members of the VSLD

or not. You want them out there or do you want them with us?

[I wrote the above for the spring 2014 newsletter, but didn't get it submitted in time for it to be included. Since then, I have attended the June 2014 VNLA board meeting, where I was part of an interesting discussion at dinner the night before our meeting. Actually, I heard part of the discussion on my way to the cooler for a beverage, and decided to stick around to listen in.

One of the VNLA board members, a Tech hort grad, and a part owner of a successful Richmond area landscape design/build company, was asked by a professor in the hort department at Tech if he was a member of the VSLD. The professor was curious about the VSLD because she had never heard of it before and had RECENTLY BEEN CONTACTED by a member of the VSLD and asked to promote the VSLD to the hort students at Tech, so she was asking a former student who now owns his own business if he found any value to being a Certified Landscape Designer. I bet you can guess what he said. His reply was that he had once thought about joining the VSLD, but looking at the requirements to join, had decided there was not enough benefit to joining when compared with the amount of time involved to become a member – he was too busy designing and selling landscapes to put together a membership application packet. This guy is turning out five (5!) designs weekly, selling at least three and adding a crew a year. He is a VCH. He is ICPI certified. He has a pesticide license, yadda, yadda, yadda – how many more certifications does he need- especially one that does nothing for his business (again, his words)?! Folks, we have a real problem here.

I realize these words will put most of you on the defensive. It's hard not to get defensive when someone tells you that they think your organization is weak – get over it; we don't have the time for that particular emotion. What we need now are ideas, participation, solutions

to our problems with how our organization is perceived. It's time to step up.

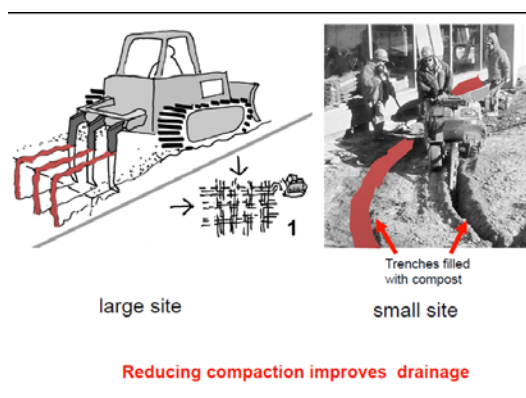
Soils and Urban Tree Conference Report

by Helen Janele

In the third annual Soils and Urban Tree Conference held in June of this year at the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, NC, five knowledgeable speakers discussed new approaches to growing and maintaining healthy city trees by exploring the soils in typical urban sites and the microbiology associated with them. The first speaker, **William Bryant Logan** spoke about how soils sustain and support all life on earth. The importance of a healthy soil, therefore, cannot be underestimated. Of the respiration taking place within a forest, 80% of it is produced within the soils themselves, by the organisms that live within, states Mr. Logan. Many of the planting sites in cities seem to be created as an afterthought of architects, engineers and city planners, and woefully inadequate for nurturing the trees that are placed in them. Poor drainage, pollution, cramped root quarters, compacted soils, etc. are frequent contributors to the unhealthy environment to which city trees are inevitably sentenced. Bill Logan reminded us that soils are formed from parent rocks slowly over time, but can be destroyed quickly through erosion, compaction, removal of the organic layer, or destruction of the living organisms within the soils by the application of the salts found in synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. He said the primary cause of tree failure in cities is compacted soils. He advocated the use of suspended pavements in cities which allow roots of city trees to escape under pavement and greatly reduce the need for compaction. He mentioned that arbuscular mycorrhizae bind themselves to tree roots with glomalin- a powerful glue made from glycoproteins. Glomalin is responsible for the formation of "peds," the macro soil particles found in friable garden soils. Mulches, we all know, serve to cool soils, hold in moisture and reduce compaction and weeds. Did you know that the slow breakdown of mulch releases nitrogen more slowly to the plants, fueling slower growth and allowing more plant resources to go into self-defense? Did you know mulch also harbors fungal

colonies that attack fusarium, phytophthora and pithium cell walls? Mr. Logan recommended mulches of all kinds- wood chips, chopped leaves, grass clippings, etc. He especially favors arborist mulch which typically contains both leaves and wood chips and thereby mimics the forest floor. Frequently, arborist mulch is delivered free- an added bonus for people.

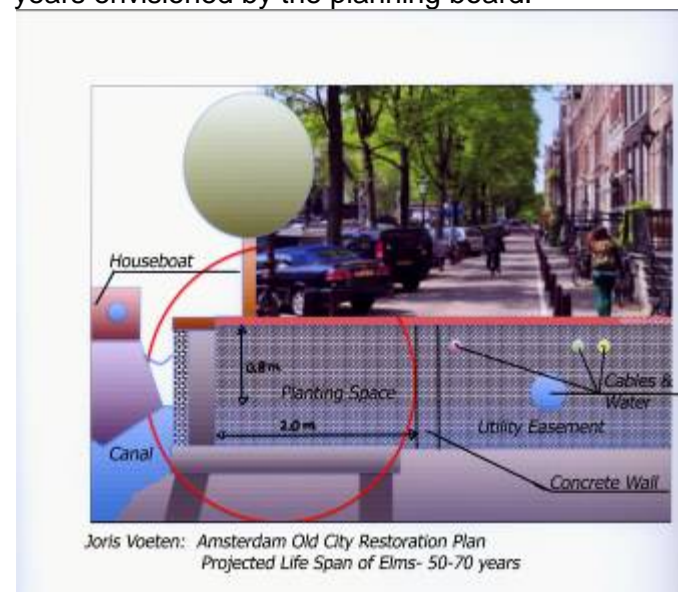
Another conference speaker, **James Urban**, also mentioned the compacted soils on city sites as being primarily responsible for the failure of city trees. He stated that the most effective way to improve such compacted, poorly drained urban soils is to break them up- with backhoes, chisels, rippers and augers.



Adding in drain lines with proper slope, modifying the grade as in raising planting sites, and altering the texture of clay soils with coarse concrete sand (50%+), expanded shale (25%+) or compost (15%+) can further improve aeration and drainage. He gave the audience several pointers on mixing soils for urban growing sites. Retrofitted soils can reasonably contain up to 10% sticks and rocks. If peds (chunks of naturally cemented soil particles) are present, they should be left in the soil mix. If soils are to be screened to remove excess debris, 2-3" mesh should be employed to allow the uneven particle sizes to enhance the macro pore spaces in the finished media. In order to prevent anaerobic microbial activity at deeper soil levels, no compost should be added below a 6" depth. Finally, Mr. Urban emphasized, as layers of soil are incrementally added and spread by heavy machinery, teeth on the front of the scoop bucket should rake or scarify the layer{ while backing out] to prevent compaction from occurring. Effort should be made at every step to constantly loosen surface to prevent compaction as the work progresses. So

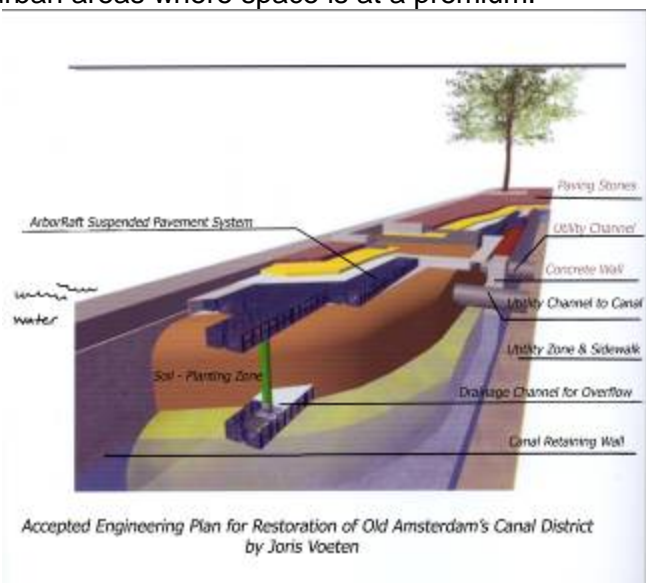
much more valuable information was presented to the audience, but time does not permit it to be included

A third speaker, young Dutch engineer **Joris Voeten** described how, in his populous country, real estate is always at a premium, but is ever so much more so in the historic heart of Amsterdam. Here, along the city's iconic elm tree-lined canals, land is subject to the conflicting demands of residents, city planners, houseboat owners, drivers, bicyclists and utility workers (underground cables). In recent years, increasingly violent winter storms have blown over many stately elms taking infrastructure with it. Simultaneously, rust was destabilizing aging canal retaining walls. Joris created a plan [selected from four others] to rebuild the canal promenades. He was able to convince city planners that elm trees consigned to such a small rooting space could only be expected to survive for 50-70 years, not the 135 years envisioned by the planning board.



Tree roots were limited vertically by the water table (see above) and to six feet of width by the concrete wall [unique to Joris's plan] dividing the planting bed and the utility zone, but parallel to the canal they were free to run. ArborRaft suspended pavement was installed over the entire area from the canal edge to the houses and paving stones were laid over the entire area to allow for parking, bicyclists, pedestrians and roadway. By spreading the vehicular weight load over a large area, these rigid geo-cellular floating panels avoided compaction of soil in root zones and allowed air and water through. Furthermore, if repairs below ground become necessary, a section of suspended

pavement can be easily taken up along with the paving stones and then replaced once the repairs are completed. It is a perfect solution in dense urban areas where space is at a premium.



Although the initial cost of planting large trees for a finished effect was high (\$200,000 per tree), city planners were willing to make this investment in order to retain the area's unique old-world charm for tourists, houseboat owners and residents (see below) and keep the income stream flowing.

Goal



Mycologist **Tradd Cotter** introduced us to his business and his passion- fungi. On his 5-acre SC establishment, Mushroom Mountain, he grows edible mushrooms like Shitake, Portobello, Chicken of the Woods, and King Stropharia for the food industry and gives talks, holds workshops and leads tours to introduce others to the marvels of the fungal universe.



In his state of the art laboratory, he intensively researches the various ways fungi can put to use in detoxifying harmful agents and in manufacturing compounds for use as antibiotics and antiviral agents. Tradd says fungi can be **trained** to break down almost anything from TNT, PCBs, Dioxins and Atroazine, to E Coli and Salmonella. He showed us time-lapse photography tracking the progress of different fungi in disassembling various highly toxic agents; it was as though the fungus sat there slowly running through the possible approaches to taking the compound apart until it finally discovered the one approach that would work. Then, it exploded all over the agent and---no more agent!!

Fungi are spectacularly successful in bioremediating industrial sites contaminated with heavy metals, petroleum and pesticides and as disassemblers of infectious bacteria. They are being developed for use as biological controls for insect pests like fire ants and the varroa mites found in honeybee colonies. Mushroom filters can be installed near livestock farms and shorelines to clean up area runoff and to break down the toxic byproducts found around paper mills, dye factories and power plants. As a mycologist, Tradd has seen firsthand and up close what wonderful recycling agents fungi are and advocates inoculating chain saws and bird seed with fungal spores to jump start the breakdown process that will release the nutrients back into the soil. He even sells Whole Foods pizza boxes printed with sporulated ink to speed the process of breakdown.

Tradd is married to an enthusiastic keen-eyed Romanian Mycologist and together they love tramping through natural areas in search of fungi. Tradd says mankind has a lot to learn from fungi, since - only 10% worldwide have ever been identified. As for poisonous varieties, Tradd

explained that children and college students are the most common victims of mushroom poisonings and tried to tell us easy ways to distinguish whether or not a mushroom was poisonous. He spoke about colors and gills, about mushrooms bruising blue when broken and showed us a color wheel he created one night when he couldn't sleep to key in mushrooms as to their toxicity. However, I had to conclude the stakes were just too high to try to start nibbling mushrooms from the wild—even using his key...Meet Tradd and learn more at <https://www.youtube.com/user/sporeprints>.

Peter Wild, another speaker, described how he successfully operates his organic tree and lawn care company called Boston Tree Preservation. One key component in his commercial maintenance program is the use of compost teas which he scientifically brews under lab controlled temperatures and precise measurements of molasses, rock dust, fish emulsion/hydrolysates, humates and kelp. These additives fuel the microbes in the tea and serve as plant nutrients. He points out that the applications of compost teas sustain the fungal, microbial, and other living organisms in the soil food web, improve plant disease resistance and encourage beneficial nematodes. He even surprised us with an electron microscope shot of fungal hyphae strangling a plant predatory nematode in a hyphal noose. He also showed us an aerial shot of his neighborhood taken at the end of a very severe drought. His lawn (white oval) receives June–August



two weekly 20-minute waterings, no synthetic products and regular mowings at 4" high. His neighbors watered theirs extensively, mowed at 1.5" high and used abundant amounts of synthetic

fertilizers, herbicides and fungicides, but still couldn't keep theirs green. Mr. Wild went on to state that any lawn maintained organically will look terrible the first year and require at least three to achieve success. For lawns, he advocates one fall application of ¼ inch compost and four yearly applications of compost tea: 1 in fall, 2 in spring and 1 in summer. For wooded areas or beds, spread 1-3" compost around the plants, and make 2 applications of compost tea in winter and two in spring. With time, the use of high quality compost tea will not only inoculate the soil and leaf surfaces with protective microbes, but will also provide nutrients for plant growth and build up the protective organisms within the soil food web.

Rounding out the conference lectures were field demonstrations on four different sites. On two of these sites, trees were in decline and were selected for diagnosis and treatment. On one site, the first six inches of soil around a cherry tree were excavated by air spade and many girdling roots were removed surgically. At the other location, four trees exhibited— from left to right down a row—increasing signs of crown dieback. By taking soil cores and measuring the soil's bulk density, progressively poorer and more compacted soil was found. Treatment included turf removal, vertical mulching and compost applications before mulching the bed. Another field demonstration centered on two excavated pits on a severe slope; one near the top and the other near the bottom. Their soil profiles demonstrated a profound movement of topsoil over the past 85 years from high to low. The remedy, of course, was to replant the slope using native plant communities that would not only lock the soil in place with roots, but also help to build up the organic layer by trapping plant debris in place. For the fourth field trip, Tradd Cotter showed us how we could grow our own mushroom colonies by rolling up wood chips seeded with mushroom spawn in strips of damp cardboard. He took us into the forest to find various mushrooms and challenged us to learn the various ways poisonous mushrooms could be identified. This combination of lectures and hands-on demonstration made this a wonderful and rewarding conference. I only wish more of you could have attended.

2014 Calendar of Events & Meetings

August 14–15, 2014

VNLA Field Day & VSLD/VNLA Summer Tour, Blacksburg, VA

<http://www.vnla.org/events/field-day-summer-tour>

August 19–21, 2014

TRAQ [Tree Risk Assessment Qualification] Course, Reston, VA

<http://www.mac-isa.org>

September 18, 2014

Evaluating and Conserving Natural Assets: Planning for green infrastructure in the developing and urban landscape

10Am– 4PM, VA Dept. of Forestry, Green Infrastructure Center, Charlottesville, VA
Combination of lectures, hands-on & discussion, \$130 Registration, CEUs available

<http://gicinc.org/events.htm>

Sept 26– October 5, 2014

State Fair, The Meadow Event Park, Doswell, VA (Caroline County)

<https://www.statefairva.org/>

October 6–7, 2014

MAC–ISA Annual Meeting, Blacksburg, VA

<http://www.mac-isa.org>

October 22–24, 2014

2014 Green Industry Conference, Louisville, Kentucky

25th Anniversary of Green Industry Conference!

<http://www.landcarenetwork.org/GIC>

October 23–24, 2014

Biennial Gillette Forum, LGBG, Kelly Education Center, Richmond VA,

Registration opens August 1

http://www.lewisginter.org/events/event_detail.php?event_id=1429

October 25–26, 2014

First Virginia "What's Out There Weekend", Richmond VA

Sponsored by The Cultural Landscape Foundation

<https://tclf.org/event/wotw-richmond>

November 5–7, 2014

VA TRAQ [Tree Risk Assessment Qualification] Course, Virginia Beach, VA

<http://www.mac-isa.org>

November 20, 2014

Evaluating and Conserving Natural Assets: Planning for green infrastructure in the developing and urban landscape

10AM– 4PM, VA Dept. of Forestry, Green Infrastructure Center, Charlottesville, VA
Combination of lectures, hands-on & discussion, \$130, CEUs available

<http://gicinc.org/events.htm>

January 14–16, 2015

MANTS, Baltimore Convention Center; Baltimore, MD

Contact: 800-431-0066 or info@mants.com or www.mants.com

January 20–23, 2015

2015 Mid-Atlantic Horticulture Short Course, Marriott City Center; Newport News, VA

Contact: 757-523-4734 or www.mahsc.org

February 28, 2015

VSLD Winter Meeting, Maymont 10:00 AM–2 PM

Details to be provided later

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