



The Quarterly Newsletter of the Virginia Society of Landscape Designers

Summer 2011

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Letter From the President

President's Note:

Welcome to another hot, humid summer in Virginia! Most of the state was fortunate enough to see a spring with adequate moisture, but it sure looks like our typical summer drought has found us at last. Here's hoping the late summer drought busters do their work quickly, but not too quickly. (Irene, I'm looking at you.)

(I could do without more earthquakes, too. I feel like we've fallen afoul of that

Chinese curse – *May you live in interesting times.* Enough, already!)

And boy, have we seen some heat, especially those of us who went on the summer tour, held this year in Lynchburg. As seems to be our curse, we brought record high temperatures with us - and, of course, the weather broke with finality not half an hour after we adjourned. Nevertheless, we all made it through and saw some truly beautiful gardens in the process. Three cheers to Yulita Ellis, tour organizer! Those

of you who attended, please do send me some photos to contribute to the Best of Tour DVD. I've added a few to this newsletter so those of you who didn't come can see what you missed.

We're in the process of brainstorming for next year's tour. Workload shared is easier on us all - if you have an interest in the tour, this is a great opportunity to get in on the steering, and an even better way to become active in the organization.

And speaking of volunteerism...remember that what VSLD accomplishes is entirely up to you, the members. We're all busy trying to make a living. In order for VSLD to support you in this, we need your assistance. It doesn't have to be a lengthy commitment. Every year, we need help with the summer tour, the winter meeting, booth appearances, and the like. Every year, there are openings on the board. Step up, folks. Ask a board member where you can help. Volunteering is a great way to get to know your fellow members and make contacts in the industry. Even if you feel you





haven't really been in the organization long enough, or don't know enough, we can use your talents.

As an organization, we've been busy. This past quarter has seen a regional meeting at the lovely LEED Platinum-certified Rice Center, sponsorship of a summer internship which will help ensure Maymont remains the jewel it has always been, and a change to the by-laws which should make transition from student to certified member a clearer path. We welcomed four new certified members - please join me in greeting Katie Sokol, Kim League, Adam Heath, and Thomas White.

There will be some changes to the annual design contest – changes I think you all will like! Please see the article in this newsletter regarding those changes. Inside, you'll also find an article on the summer tour and a reprint of an article on a very interesting connection between invasive plants and Lyme disease.

It's been a good year thus far. Here's hoping it only gets better.

Cheers!

Chris Coen
2011 President

Current Membership Totals:

136 Total VSLD Members;

- 101 Certified
- 12 Associate
- 18 Student
- 4 Liaison
- 1 Honorary

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden--Kay Moore, liaison

The Gillette Forum will open with a dinner and lecture on Wednesday, October 26th at 5:30. The symposium will be on Thursday, Oct 27th. The lectures will "consider how conservation, stewardship of historic properties, and environmental responsibility can be merged into harmonious, elegant, and sustainable landscapes and gardens."

The keynote speaker is Patricia O'Donnell of Heritage Landscapes, LLC, who will discuss her work at Bamboo Brook, the home of Martha Brookes Hutcheson. This home is unique in its early use of water conservation.

Rick Darke--author, photographer, and lecturer--will speak on the design and stewardship of the livable landscape. Landscape designer Larry Weaner will discuss natural landscapes with artistic traditions of garden design. His work was often cited by Douglas Tallamy in *Bringing Nature Home*.

A pre-forum workshop will be led by Rosemary Alexander on Wednesday, Oct. 26th from 10 to 4. This workshop will work with master planting design. Students will create a planting plan for a sample garden design under Rosemary's guidance. By the end of the day, the student will have a completed plan using her principles. This workshop is different from the one a number of VSLDers attended a couple of years ago. By all reports I've heard from people who attended her first workshop, she was very good and the students came out feeling inspired and renewed.

VSLD Summer Tour 2011

This summer we're treated to two wonderful recounts of the summer tour. Chris Coen and Katie Sokol have both written excellent summaries. In an effort to get a better feel for the outing, both articles are printed below. – Editor.

Sweet Summer Swelter: Recollections of the Lynchburg Summer Garden Tour

By Chris Coen



1 Christian arbor w/ view of mountains - Margaret Pavela

I don't know about you, but my normal expectation of a summer garden tour is heat and humidity in occasionally overwhelming amounts (and occasional heat sickness as a result), glorious gardens doing their best to wow us despite the calendar insisting *it's July, people, what do you expect?*, fellowship, good food, and a pool. Happily, my expectations on all of these counts were satisfied (with the exception of the heat sickness, which I was pleasantly surprised to have avoided). We came to Lynchburg, we saw lovely gardens, and we...well, if we did not conquer, we were not quite conquered by the heat, either.



2 Hotter! - Chris Coen

Lynchburg quite surprised me. I was not prepared for the sheer up- and downness of the city and its suburbs. I love landscapes which embrace their elevation changes, however, and many of the gardens tour coordinator Yulita Ellis arranged for us to view gave me this in spades. A person who truly appreciated stairs would have swooned on some of these sites.

She'd have had room to swoon, too, given that we were a very modest tour of just 18 souls, four of them guests. The size of the tour made it one of the more pleasant I've been on. There were just two vehicles in our caravan on bus day, which made it easy to figure out who was slow getting back to the van after catching that perfect shot of an ideal vista. We had time, and space, to sit and chat with our hosts, who were gracious to a fault and clearly were pleased we were there. (And for a wonder, no one was late showing up at the vans in the morning!)



3 Andrew Pool Cabana - Katie Sokol

Not only did the hotel have a pool (which the usual suspects quickly made use of), but nearly every garden we visited did, too – and the variety of pool houses and cabanas was instructive. I would love to be able to duplicate the cool comfort to be found inside one cabana on the Christian property, where we ate a leisurely lunch and where the view of the mountains was so entirely perfect despite being nestled into a neighborhood. The Dureson garden was almost entirely below street level, making the roof of the pool cabana appear to float beyond the protective fence.



4 Biesmier outdoor kitchen - Peggy Krapf



5 Anne Spencer arbor - Chris Coen

Probably the one feature I wanted most to steal for my very own was a magnificent arbor at the Anne Spencer House. Built on a massive scale, it spanned the property and offered not only structure but also shade and enclosure. It was truly a part of the

landscape, not just a framework for growing things. The current arbor is a reconstruction from period photographs – so there, remember to keep your project photos. You may want them later.

As for food, memorable is the evening when, after a dinner of very creative salad and pizza, one of us (ahem) discovered that the pizza place had run out of the good desserts and, jonesing for ice cream, convinced the rest of the carload to go hunting for it. We drove out, we drove back, we drove around the block: no ice cream. Not until the next-to-last stop of the tour, that is, when we discovered that the Farmbasket garden and gift shop had many different varieties of gelato. Score!

I got my bowl, and sat in a parking lot in the rain, and was happy. >:-)

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Further on the summer tour: one of our hostesses, Marty Wright, sent the following kind note.

Hi Yulita,

I'm sorry to have taken so long to pen a note of thanks for the bag of goodies left in my house - WOW! I wasn't expecting a thing, so what a pleasant surprise. I will definitely use the repellent and Burt's Bees ointment - sooner probably than later.

I was so sorry to miss your visit with all the landscape designers. I wanted to hear their comments and suggestions and am grateful that some took the time to write. I plan to use the website mentioned when we replant in the fall.

Creeping fig on the sunspace wall sounds perfect. I was interested to learn that the damage to the Rudbeckia is from rabbits. I've seen plenty of them but had no idea they craved black-eyed susans.

Thanks again for thinking of us, Yulita. I hope you are enjoying this hot summer - love those cool mornings!

- Marty Wright

VSLD Summer Tour 2011

By Katie Sokol
Down River Landscape Design

This was my first Summer Tour as a new member and I was quite impressed with the gardens we visited and how well it was planned. Despite the heat, Yulita kept us on schedule giving everyone enough time to cool off a bit at each garden stop.

As a new resident of Virginia, I particularly enjoyed the Anne Spencer Garden, City Cemetery, and Sweet Briar College where I could learn more about the history of the area. Had it not been so hot we would probably have stayed longer at the Riverfront Park where the city has done a storm water management project incorporating a large rain garden that was in full bloom.

The seven residential gardens that we visited on day two ranged from small to large in size and formal to informal in the design style. We visited a tiny backyard with a lovely koi pond and Japanese style pavilion, a “green” inspired home with a wonderful green roof, a larger yard with a very large koi pond, stream, and waterfall which started in the front yard and continued into the side yard. This home also had a very nice elevated terrace with an outdoor kitchen and fire pit. We then visited a classically designed farmhouse that felt like it was built 100 years ago but actually was built in 1997. This garden had a very formal layout with a lap pool, fountain, and elevated terrace. A low, curved brick wall enclosed the back yard and gave separation to the more informal landscape beyond. After a refreshing lunch we moved on to a very traditional home that had a rather plain front yard. However, the rear yard was a different world altogether. A beautiful pool and spa with a wonderful pool cabana had been built on what once had been a sloping lawn. They made use of the lower level beneath the deck by turning it into an al fresco play room with

fireplace, table games, and places to sit and see the pool at the same time.

The next garden was difficult to leave. The rear yard was so inviting and offered so many places to sit in the shade overlooking the pool and gardens. The gardens were lush and full of flowers. We ended the day at a property that had been purchased in 1979 and had been neglected. Working with the large existing trees, the homeowners have carved out charming garden spaces in an informal style. This was a garden that felt comfortable even on the hottest of days.

We ended {the second day} with a wonderful dinner at Isabella’s Restaurant. I am so glad that I attended this tour and was warmly welcomed by all.



6 Dinner Out – Michele Fletcher

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Editor's Notes:

Design contest and marketing: stepping up, looking forward

As all of us know, marketing challenges abound this year. VSLD as an organization continues to look for ways to better market our association, our members, and our industry.

One of the tools we would like to make better use of is our annual design contest. During the recent design contest “summit,” a number of ideas were proposed, some of which we’re going to institute this year. How would you like not only a plaque for winning the contest, but also **a check**? And seeing your name and project not only on the booth, but also on the website and, we hope, in an article in Virginia Gardener magazine (and potentially others around the state)? And, if members step forward and help us launch it, on a **VSLD Facebook** page? As you can see, we are serious about seizing the marketing potential the contest offers.

To make this happen, we will be forming a **design contest committee**, which will be charged with ensuring the professionalism and usefulness of the contest to the association and the members. The vice president will serve as chair of this committee. If you have an interest in helping guide the design contest, please contact Tom Thompson, your 2011 vice president.

In addition to the prize money, one of the changes we intend to institute this year is a move toward more inclusiveness. Perhaps you might like to enter one of your designs, but your client did not choose to ask you to color it, and you feel that your black and white design might not compete favorably with the gorgeous artistic renderings you’ve seen win in previous years. This year we will have two **categories**, in part to address this potential roadblock: one will be for full-color presentations,

and the other will be “black tie”: black and white only. There will be no distinctions made for size or type of project or whether it’s installed or still on paper. Let the best design triumph!

The “**own work**” issue was discussed in some depth. VSLD certifies designers, not companies. We concluded that, while some contests might make provision for those designers who work in concert with draftsmen and other associated industry professionals to enter a joint project, our contest had to retain the requirement that each entry be the work of a single designer – that is, from conception through drawing to rendering (including coloring) of the presentation drawing(s).

We will more than likely be forming a **marketing committee** in the coming months to keep on top of our goals and come up with ideas for moving forward. If you are interested in serving on this committee – especially if you’re up on the current technology (Facebook and Twitter and whatever comes next) – we need you.

If you have questions about the design contest, marketing, or the “own work” concept, please contact one of the board members. Their names and contact information are listed at the end of this newsletter and on the website.

VSLD Silent Auction at VNLA Field Day

The VSLD Silent Auction at the VNLA Field Day held at Ingleside Vineyard was a great success because of our generous donators and buyers! Thanks to both groups! We raised \$928.00. My thanks also to the volunteers who helped: Chris Coen, Anne Henley, Kay Moore, Margaret Pavela, Brian O’Neil, Tom Thompson. Annmari Ingersoll and Fletch Flemer at Ingleside Vineyard were most gracious and helpful. We had an interesting room to set up our items, the Ingleside Vineyard Museum.

Participants could view the auction items and the museum pieces. If you haven't been to Ingleside Vineyard or Nursery, you need to go and visit.

The following companies, organizations and persons made donations:

Norfolk Botanical Garden, Norfolk
Mid-Atlantic Horticultural Short Course
Smithfield Gardens, Suffolk
Lancaster Farms, Suffolk
Bennett's Creek Nursery, Suffolk
Village Garden Center, Fishersville
Snow's Garden and Landscape Center, Centerville
Richmond Kickers Soccer, Richmond
Meadow's Farm Garden Center and Nursery, Frederickburg
Saunders Brothers Inc., Piney River
Hedge Fine Blooms Floral Design, Charlottesville
Eltzroth and Thompson Greenhouse, Charlottesville
Countryside Gardens, Hampton
Ingleside Vineyards, Oak Grove
Biltmore, Asheville, NC
Shreckhise Nursery, Grottoes
Beautiful Gardens, VT, Blacksburg
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, Richmond
Linda Pinkham, Carrollton
Great Big Greenhouse, Richmond
Tankard Nurseries, Exmore
Knotts Creek Nursery, Suffolk
Ennion Williams, Richmond
Margaret Pavela, Fredericksburg



7 Silent Auction at VnLA Field Day

We now have a local celebrity among our ranks! Michele Fletcher had a booth at the Rockbridge (Lexington, VA) Community Festival and handed out VSLD brochures, shared design information and sold landscape photography. You can see the video from the local Rockbridge Weekly newspaper at; <http://www.rockbridgeweekly.com/rwfrontvideos2.php>

Also, VSLD is looking for members in the Southwest region to man a booth at the Roanoke & Salem Home and Garden show in early 2012. If interested please contact Michele Fletcher at; 540-464-1599 plantlover@ntelos.net



8 Michele at her booth

Article:

The following article was brought to us by Chris Coen. As Lyme disease is becoming an ever increasing issue, all information on its spread, symptoms, etc needs to be shared.

Please feel free to respond or comment on this or any other article reprinted in our newsletter.

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Scientists link invasive barberry to Lyme disease

By Judy Benson

Publication: The Day - www.theday.com
Published 06/20/2011 12:00 AM

Deer are hosts for adult deer ticks and Japanese barberry provides them a nursery

Lyme - Friday morning, off a shady wet trail in the town that gave Lyme disease its name, a man with a 30-pound propane tank and a flame-throwing wand showed a group from local land trusts how a bit of fire in the right spots can make their woodlands healthier for both native wildlife and humans.

"You want to heat it until the stem glows. Then its dead," said Jeffrey Ward, chief scientist at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's Department of Forestry and Agriculture. He talked over the loud gush of the propane torch as he wielded it on a patch of thorny green branches springing from the forest floor in the Eno Preserve, owned by the Lyme Land Conservation Trust.

Ward's demonstration, for representatives of Lyme, Salem and East Haddam land trusts and the Nature Conservancy, is the outreach part of five years of research he and fellow experiment station scientist

Scott Williams have been doing on the relationship between Japanese barberry, ticks that carry Lyme disease and deer overpopulation.

A highly invasive plant that forms dense canopies in forests - particularly those with high deer populations that eat most every other plant - Japanese barberry also creates moist, cool shelters that harbor ticks that carry the Lyme disease bacteria, Ward's and Williams' research has shown. Hot, dry conditions suppress tick populations.

At 28 study areas, including a parcel along Lord's Cove in Old Lyme, the two have been studying various aspects of the triangular relationship between ticks, deer and barberry, and spreading their message to land conservation organizations about the best methods for ridding forests of barberry. Deer serve as hosts for adult ticks, while the barberry functions as a nursery for ticks in their juvenile stages.

"How fitting, here we are in Lyme," said Ward during a presentation at the Lyme fire station before the torching demonstration, referring to the story of how Lyme disease was first identified in the 1970s from a cluster of cases in that town. Last year, there were an estimated 3,068 cases of the illness in Connecticut, causing victims a range of symptoms from flu-like fever, chills, headache and muscle aches to more serious nerve damage and arthritis.

During the presentation, Williams said tick abundance in barberry-infested areas is 67 percent higher than those where native plants are predominant. Also, the percentage of ticks that carry the Lyme bacteria is higher - 126 infected ticks per acre versus 10 per acre in barberry-free areas, Williams said, though the reason for that is as yet unclear. After barberry removal, Ward said, tick populations drop as much as 80 percent.

He stressed that they're not advocating for barberry removal just because it's non-native.

"It's not just an esoteric thing," he said. "It depresses wildflowers and native trees, and by controlling barberry you can have a real impact on human health."

Reservoirs surrounded by dense barberry also have diminished water quality, he said, because the local ecosystem it creates promotes more soil erosion than areas with more native trees and shrubs.

Voluntary phase-out

With red berries in the fall and small oval leaves in green, red or purple, the shrub was introduced to this country as a landscaping plant more than 100 years ago. It was often planted as a hedge to cordon off properties, its thorny branches forming an effective natural fence. The berries, a popular food for birds, deer and small animals, hold seeds that are rapidly spread in animal waste.

Bob Heffernan, executive director of the Connecticut Green Industry Council, said barberry continues to be popular, accounting for \$4.9 million in sales in 2004. Despite that, the council, which represents landscapers, plant sales companies and related businesses, last year began a voluntary phase-out on sales of 25 varieties of barberry that research had shown to be the most highly prolific and invasive. The most common variety found growing wild in woodlands, with green leaves, was among them. The research to identify the 25 types, conducted at the University of Connecticut, was commissioned by the council.

Heffernan noted that despite the voluntary phase out in-state, which gives businesses until June 30, 2013, to get rid of remaining inventory, new invasive barberry plants continue to come into Connecticut when residents and businesses order them from out-of-state mail-order suppliers.

The voluntary phase-out, he said, was enacted because of barberry's highly invasive properties, but

its role as a host for tick populations provides added motivation.

What should homeowners with a barberry bush or two in their yard do?

Ward said he doesn't think removing it is necessary, although there are preferable non-native shrubs such as bayberry, highbush blueberry and winterberry.

"There are so many barberry in most forests, and they produce so many seeds, that removing the couple of plants in your yard is more symbolic than effective, sort of like using your finger to plug a leak in a dike," he said. "Time, energy and money would be better spent first controlling barberry infestations in the woods and along trails."

Major challenge

But for land conservation groups, with limited budgets and labor pools composed mostly of volunteers, tackling this persistent invasive shrub is a major challenge.

David Gumbart, assistant director of land management for the Nature Conservancy's Connecticut chapter, said barberry can be found on nearly all of the organization's 64 properties in the state. The conservancy has begun a program to determine the area's most in need of removal and, over the past two years, worked with the Lyme Land Conservation Trust on a pilot project at two properties.

Linda Bireley, executive assistant for the Lyme trust, said her group recognizes it as a key part of its land management responsibilities.

"Every one of our properties has some barberry somewhere," she said.

Management plans being developed for each of its nine sites will include barberry removal, she said.

In Salem, the land trust has been working with a Natural Resources Conservation Service grant to get rid of barberry from the Walden Preserve, said Mark LaCasse, steward for the land trust.

A crucial part of scientists' Ward and Williams' work has been finding the most effective and economical ways to win the war against barberry, and spreading the word in workshops that include safety talks and demonstrations. That's where the propane tank and torch come in. For setup of tank, torch, backpack and safety equipment, land trusts should expect to spent about \$300, he said.

Removal is a two-step process, they said, beginning with mechanical cutting with a brush saw or, in some cases, tearing up dense clusters with a small bulldozer. That is followed by selective application of herbicides or burning - a more labor intensive alternative, but preferred around wetlands, streams and other sensitive areas. After initial eradication, land managers should return with crews every year or so to prevent re-growth. In some places, there is so much of the prickly plant that the problem becomes figuring out where to begin, Ward said.

"Start along a trail, do a section 50 feet wide along the trail, then go back and widen it," he advised. "You'll get a sense of accomplishment, and it reduces the risk of Lyme disease for you and your pets."

During the demonstration, Ward pointed out one of the aspects of barberry's growing habits that's crucial for would-be barberry conquerors to understand.

"See where this branch touches the ground? That's how it creeps across the landscape, like fungus," he said, directing flame at the point where the branch disappeared into the leaf litter, as sparks flew into the damp air.

Additional reading:

Effects of Japanese Barberry (Ranunculales: Berberidaceae) Removal and Resulting Microclimatic Changes on *Ixodes scapularis* (Acari: Ixodidae) Abundances in Connecticut, USA - Author(s): Scott C. Williams and Jeffrey S. Ward, Environmental Entomology, 39(6):1911-1921. 2010.

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<http://www.theday.com/article/20110620/NWS01/306209953/-1/NWS>

Upcoming Events:

October 26-29 2011:

PLANET

Professional Landcare Network

2011 Green Industry Conference

Louisville, Kentucky

October 28-29, 2011:

Gillette Forum, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden,

http://www.lewisginter.org/events/event_detail.php?event_id=275

January 11-13, 2012:

MANTS, Baltimore Convention Center, www.mants.com

January 30-February 2, 2012:

MAHCS (Mid-Atlantic Hort Short Course), Marriott at City Center, Newport News, www.mahsc.org

February 25, 2012:

VSLD Winter meeting, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

April 21-28, 2012: Historic Garden Week

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