



## The Quarterly Newsletter of the Virginia Society of Landscape Designers

### Fall 2014

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### **President's Letter:**

October 2014

The proclamation by Governor McAuliffe that October is "*Fall is for Planting Month*" was a welcome slogan to raise awareness of the green industry. Hopefully it spurred more work to our businesses with additional design and install projects. VSLD Board of Directors

member Jeff Klingel mentioned that this fall has been his busiest in 15 years. I hope everyone has been experiencing increased business as well.

Our fall board meeting was held October 23 at Steel Services in Richmond. We departed from our usual 10 am meeting time and started at 1 pm instead to accommodate members attending the evening Gillette Forum.

This Gillette Forum was a delightful experience! Over the course of Thursday evening and all day Friday we listened to four talented speakers who shared projects and insight on combining naturalism and ecology into our contemporary planting designs. VSLD had eleven members in attendance including a new student member, Anna Best.

We are looking forward to our wonderful Winter meeting at beautiful Maymont on Feb. 28, 2015 with guest speaker Ben Greenberg. Mr. Greenberg is a

professional photographer who will lead us on an exploration of how to take award winning digital photos of our projects. There's a possibility we might do a "potluck" breakfast table, but we will let you know as we get closer to the date. A catered hot lunch will be served. The registration form is included in this newsletter. We also hope to have registration forms at the winter meeting for the upcoming 2015 Summer Tour July 21-23.



Amelanchier x grandiflora 'Autumn Brilliance' Photo: Helen Janele

We thanked Tom and Eve for their hard work in setting up and manning the booth at the State Fair from Sept. 26 – Oct. 4. Eve said the new pop-up Velcro display worked great. They passed out nearly 1000 brochures and we discussed the merits of doing it again next year since we agreed in the end that it is worthwhile. Thanks also to Jane Abbott, Susan Kappel, and Lesley Sewell for their help.

The Piedmont Landscape Assoc. seminar will be held Feb. 18 in Charlottesville. We will donate a book or books for door prizes. If you have a gently used landscape/plant book you would like to

donate, please let us know. We also pre-approved \$50 for a table.

Christie Fargis and Theresa Biagioli are going to get all dressed up and attend the gala opening night of the VMFA Fine Arts & Flowers which we are sponsoring this year. Knock 'em dead ladies!

Christie is also hard at work stuffing envelopes with membership renewal forms so keep an eye open for them in your mailbox.

Kay Moore reported that the Winter Symposium will take place Feb. 11-12 at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden with Ken Druse on the speaker list. Kay also discovered an organization called Storefront for Community Design which could be an interesting place for VSLD involvement. Check out [www.storefront.richmond.org](http://www.storefront.richmond.org) for more information.

Diane Roselius will be handling our booth at the Mid-Atlantic Horticulture Short Course in Newport News on Jan. 20-23, 2015. We will also do a social hour. Please contact Diane if you can give her a hand.

Theresa Biagioli has written a membership phone survey that will ask you questions about your practice and what you gain from membership in VSLD. This survey will start once the fall planting season has slowed. We look forward to hearing your comments.

Michele reported that she has contacted Peggy Singlemann about possible VSLD involvement in a Va. Home Grown Show which Peggy co-hosts. If we want to increase our Facebook page exposure, Michele says we need more posts which means we need more administrators, so let us know if you're interested. She suggested it would be nice if someone started doing member interviews again for the newsletters. Sadly, Michele also reported that she has decided to step down from her Marketing Chair position. We thank her for all she has done and please read further in this newsletter for details about the position.

If you have an article or announcement, a photo or community event to share, please contact our newsletter editor, Helen Janele. For added exposure I also urge you to contact your local newspaper either on your own or via Denise Greene our Public Relations chair at [sassafrasfarm@verizon.net](mailto:sassafrasfarm@verizon.net). If you like social media

try out our Facebook page or join our private group page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/VSLD2013/>

Those of us on the board or chairing a committee welcome your help and comments on every level. Please join us in making this a stronger organization and I hope to see many of you at the Winter Meeting!

*Katie*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



### MID-ATLANTIC HORTICULTURE SHORT COURSE January 20-23, 2015

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA – (August 2014) – The Mid-Atlantic Horticulture Short Course will be held January 20-23, 2015, at the Marriott at City Center in Newport News, Virginia. This is the Green Industry educational highlight of the Mid-Atlantic region. International, national and regional speakers present new techniques, university research and advances in all aspects of horticultural industries. The three-day event is divided into industry-specific tracks, and includes 6.5 hours of education daily! Registration is only \$115 per day and opens online in mid-October.

#### 2015 INVITED SPEAKERS

**Ian Baldwin**, Business Adviser, Garden & Hardware Retailers

**Katie Dubow**, Social Media Specialist, Garden Media Group

**Bernie Erven**, Emeritus, Human Resources & Management, Ohio State University

**Mike Goatley**, Turfgrass Specialist, Virginia Tech University

**Jason Grabowsky**, Arboriculture & Urban Forestry, Rutgers

**John Kennedy**, Business & Customer Service Consultant

**Bryce Lane**, Teacher & Horticulturist, NCSU Emeritus Lecturer

**Christopher J. Luley**, Pres. & Pathologist, Urban Forestry, LLC

**Jeff McManus**, Director Landscape Services, Univ. Mississippi

**Marta McDowell**, Landscape History, NY Botanical Garden

**Timothy Sims**, Booker T Washington National Monument

#### SPECIALTY WORKSHOPS (IN DEVELOPMENT)

Bonsai, Grafting, Insect ID, Herbaceous & Woody Plant Propagation, Seed Saving; Willow Garden Art

#### HORTICULTURE SKILLS IN SPANISH:

**Día de Habilidad en Horticultura en Español**

(Monday Jan. 19 - pre-conference)

## CONTINUING EDUCATION AVAILABLE FROM THESE PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

### ☐ American Society Landscape Architects' LA CES™

(ASLA's Continuing Education System)

### ☐ Association of Professional Landscape Designers

### ☐ Certified Nurseryman (or state equivalent)

### ☐ Crew Manager and Advanced Crew Manager

(a Virginia Horticultural Foundation program)

### ☐ Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA)

### ☐ International Society of Arboriculture (ISA)

### ☐ Irrigation Association (IA)

### ☐ North Carolina Board of Landscape Architects (NC BoLA)

### ☐ Pesticide Applicator Recertification

(10 states + the District of Columbia)

### ☐ Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS)

### ☐ Professional Landcare Network (PLANET)

### ☐ Virginia Certified Horticulturist (VCH)

### ☐ Virginia Certified Advanced Horticulturist (VACH)

### ☐ Virginia Dept. Professional Occupational Regulation

(registered Virginia Landscape Architects)

### ☐ Virginia Dept. of Conservation & Recreation's

### Nutrient Management Program

### ☐ Virginia Society of Landscape Designers (VSLD)

Online Registration & digital program available in mid-October. More information is available from [www.mahsc.org](http://www.mahsc.org), on the event's Facebook page or by calling 757-523-4734.

*The Mid-Atlantic Horticulture Short Course is produced by The Virginia Horticultural Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides educational programs in horticulture for professionals and the public.*

MAHSC, PO Box 64446 ~ Virginia Beach, Virginia 23467 ~ (757) 523-4734 ~ Fax: (757) 366-9604 [www.mahsc.org](http://www.mahsc.org) ~ [info@vahort.org](mailto:info@vahort.org)



Sedum 'Mr. Goodbud

Photo: Helen Janele

## VSLD Marketing Chair Opening

We are sorry to announce that Michele Fletcher is stepping down due to health problems. She is unhappy to depart but will be willing to help and give guidance to the new person when able. Michele, we thank you for your diligence and leadership!

### The primary duties of this position are:

Manage the VSLD Facebook page; solicit content from members

Notify the Board of upcoming events

Look for new marketing opportunities

Explore other social media

Please contact Katie if you are interested:

[downriverlandscapedesign@gmail.com](mailto:downriverlandscapedesign@gmail.com) or 540-742-3306

## Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden Liaison Chair

by Kay Moore

The Winter Symposium/CVNLA Short Course will be Feb. 11, 12, and 13 of 2015. The headliner will be Ken Druse on Feb. 12th. Last year that day of the program sold out. Registration begins on Dec. 1st on the website or by phone.

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## Richmond Regional Meetings

by Kay Moore

Our planned August get-together at Chuck's had to be cancelled because of septic field problems. I hope Chuck will invite us next year.

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*[Reprinting of [ Virginia Governor's Terry McCaulliff's  
"Fall is for Planting" Declaration]*

## CERTIFICATE of RECOGNITION

By virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution of Virginia in the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is hereby officially recognized:

### FALL IS FOR PLANTING MONTH

WHEREAS, trees and plants support a healthy environment and are essential to human well-being; and



WHEREAS, trees help promote clean air, with tree leaves and roots acting as natural water filters that trap pollutants; and  
 WHEREAS, storm water is a leading source of pollution for Virginia's rivers, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay; and  
 WHEREAS, planting regionally compatible plants, particularly native plants, also slows the flow of storm water runoff, preventing it from running into nearby rivers and streams; and  
 WHEREAS, cooler temperatures, warm soils, increased rains, and fewer insects and pests make fall an ideal time of year for planting trees, shrubs, and hardy perennials; and  
 WHEREAS Virginia has 290 commercial plant growers that generate \$272 million in sales; \$1.2 billion in landscaping, installation and maintenance; and ranks 6th in Virginia agriculture commodity sales; and  
 WHEREAS, stock planted between September and the first frost in November or December have months to develop roots to survive the hot and humid summer to follow; and  
 WHEREAS, the Central Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association has joined with the James River Association, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, the Green Industry Council, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to celebrate October as Fall is for Planting Month; and  
 WHEREAS, Fall is for Planting Month is an opportunity for Virginians to plant more trees and shrubs to help reduce the flow of storm water runoff;  
 NOW, THEREFORE, I, Terence R. McAuliffe, do hereby recognize October 2014 as FALL IS FOR PLANTING MONTH in our COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.

[Governor's State of Virginia Seal]

[Governor Terry McAuliffe's Signature]

[Signature of Secretary of Commonwealth]

(Above adaptation of PDF File into Word without paying for conversion- H. Janele)

## GARDENS OF FRANCE: MONET'S GARDEN

by Diane Roselius

In May, Dave and I travelled with Robert McDuffie on his "Gardens of France" tour. We flew to Paris and went directly to Monet's Garden in Giverny. This garden was designed and planted by Monet and became the subject of many of his paintings. He was

influenced by the English country garden which was the opposite of how gardens in France were designed at the time.



Claude Monet was a leader in the Impressionist Art movement. He was also one of the first artists to paint outdoors- called "open-air" painting. Monet was inspired by the Japanese prints that he collected and by his visits to England. The result was a garden that is brightly colored, untamed and large. Monet diverted a river to form a pond and then planted willows, bamboo, camellias, ferns and perennials. This pond was filled with water lilies and a couple of bridges. He spent many hours in his small boat painting scenes from this location.



Monet painted this scene at different times during the day and in different seasons.

Below is a picture of his home where he raised eight children.



Layout of Monet's garden.

We spent several hours roaming his garden. It was quite a delight. This was the first

of many gardens we were to visit on our journey.

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## Making Beauty Sustainable: The Charles F. Gillette Forum for 2014

by Chris Coen

This week's biennial reappearance of the Gillette Forum focused on a topic which many of us are wrestling with. Given the current interest in native plants and the environment, how do we as landscape designers fit those native plants and environmental concerns into the desires of our clients, which are frequently still focused on appearance and formality? How do we successfully challenge the American suburban aesthetic of neatness? How do we reach the denizens of "screen world," where the natural world is filtered through what they see on their electronic devices' screens? The speakers - blogger Thomas Rainer, Mt. Cuba Center director of horticulture Travis Beck, and Oehme van Sweden principal Sheila Brady, along with Washington Post columnist and editor Adrian Higgins - offered a lot of thoughtful discussion on the subject.

Thomas Rainer explored the concept of designing using plant communities. In trying to interpret (rather than re-create) nature in our clients' landscapes, it is easy to struggle with plant selection. Thomas suggested we look instead to the sorts of relationships plants commonly form in nature and use that as our guideline. Instead of focusing just on the showy design layer of plants, then, he recommended we also include groundcovers and perennials to ensure our native plants receive the support and weed protection they need to look their best and satisfy our clients.

Travis Beck provided the panel's scientific side, discussing the principles of ecologic design. It's a real challenge, when you're aiming for a proper distribution of species in a design plan, to figure out how many of a given species you will need to reach that distribution ratio. And how do we take into account the competition and succession of species? Using ecology to determine which new trees to use in rejuvenating a woodland grove, Travis showed us how to tackle this very complex subject. Travis also suggested the use of a framework to impose a

sense of deliberateness on the relative unstructured forms of a naturalistic planting.

Sheila Brady gave insights into the recent re-imagining and re-installation of the New York Botanic Garden's native plants display, showing us how her team tackled science and expectations to distill the essence of New England native flora across multiple habitats. Imagine designing the layout for 75,000 plants in a multi-acre space!

Adrian Higgins asked us to consider an Adolph Gottlieb quote: "We always talk about going back to Nature. Why don't we ever talk about going forward to Nature?" Adrian noted that we no longer have the luxury of dealing with the landscape as an exercise in aesthetics - but we do have the advantage of amazing native plant compositions like New York's Highline which will influence the public's acceptance of naturalism.

As Thomas stated and the other speakers reiterated, we have reached the point where there is no longer any going back to the untouched wilderness conditions our forefathers venerated. This is planting design for a post-wild world, and it's an exciting time to be a designer.

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Of course, some recommended reading came out of the lectures. Travis Beck's 2013 book *The Principles of Ecological Landscape Design* was praised by the other speakers for its exploration of the science behind what had been an emotionally charged, subjective topic. Thomas Rainer's influential blog, *grounded design* (<http://landscapeofmeaning.blogspot.com>), is often cited by other design professionals. (Thomas also has a new book, to be released late in 2015, with Claudia West, which will explore the concept and implementation of designing within plant communities.) Other resources recommended by the speakers were *Perennials and Their Garden Habitats* by Richard Hansen and Friedrich Stahl; *Design with Nature* by Ian McHarg; the Missouri Botanic Garden's MOBOT (<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/plantfinder/plantfindersearch.aspx>); and North Creek Nursery's catalog and landscape plug manual (<http://www.northcreeknurseries.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/resources.links/index.htm>).

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## In Honor of a Fallen Idol: Reverie on the Crepe Myrtle

by Anne Henley

I'm a native of Alabama, and grew up traveling extensively all over the South. I always admired Crepe Myrtles' bright frilly dresses, their silky limbs, and the pearly seedpods we'd use to make things. However, my reaction to Crepe Myrtles has been transformed over the years, as I've learned more about the role of plants in creating our vision of ecological harmony, establishing and celebrating the identity of a specific place, and strengthening the cultural bonds we cultivate and transmit to posterity.

Crestfallen, I feel I've lost a favorite old aunt; no longer do I need to seek her out, because like a fractal in a carnival fun house, she appears wherever I look.

As a landscape designer, I feel responsible for setting a good example, demonstrating that ecological responsibility and traditional emblems of beauty are not mutually exclusive. So for both personal and professional reasons, I've decided to impose a personal moratorium on specifying more than the fewest Crepe Myrtles at a time--and then only where their presence is appropriate. By giving the grand dame a rest, maybe she'll eventually recover the flouncy dignity of her glory days. Here are a few of the main reasons I'm curtailing my use of CM's, and I hope you'll



consider for yourselves what your own work is really all about.



*A splendid grove of Crepe Myrtle in its happy coastal home*

-- A noted ecologist recently called Crepe Myrtles “the junk food” of the gardener’s world. Yes, they’re delectable, long-blooming, and, given a mild winter and plenty of sunshine, they look reliably fetching almost every summer. Yet in terms of room and board for local pollinators, they might as well sprout a permanent “no vacancy sign.” This, together with the considerable space they gobble from more productive species, means CM’s actually have a *negative* ecological value--crucial to the vitality of the native flora and fauna that define our region.

-- I believe that as designers (and other landscape professionals), it’s our responsibility to educate our clients and by extension, the larger public, about the value of landscape design to sustain the contextual natural environment that supports us all. Beyond mere lip service, each of us needs to practice the principles we avow to support.

-- CM’s don’t “belong” in central Virginia. With the possible exception of resorts and swimming pools where one is consciously conjuring the illusion of warmer climes, their flamboyantly tropical character dilutes the essence

of the Appalachian mountains that drew many of us here, and which most of us profess to cherish.

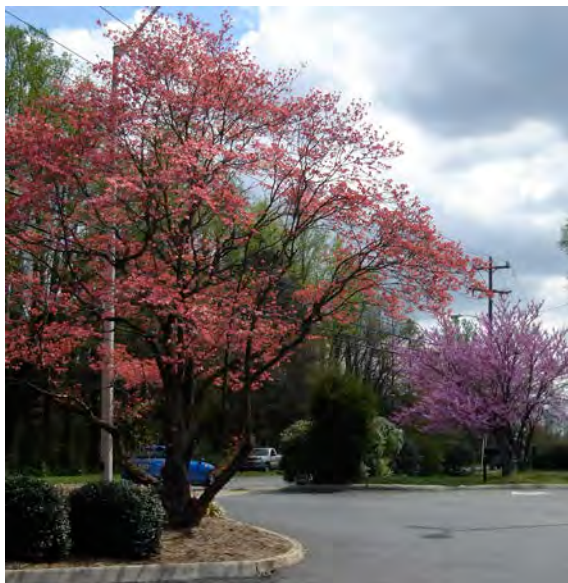
-- CM’s are among the major contributors to the wave of homogenous design I call the “Nowhere Man” syndrome; thanks to the nationwide prevalence of this and a limited palette of other worn out selections, they no longer provide the slightest clue to the identity of the locale in which they are found.

-- As a result of such gross over-planting, their image is becoming tawdry; the mindless ubiquity of Crepe Myrtles tarnishes their best qualities and robs them of their rightful dignity.-

-- Misplaced so casually for so long, Crepe Myrtles are what my cousin used to call “gas station plants:” the cheapest way to splash color that supposedly flags down consumers. In the process, the message such plantings impart is cheap and fast, and all too often, *not* good.

-- The space they occupy is thereby robbed from many more worthwhile specimens that would pull their weight ecologically, as well as emphasize the *genius loci*.

-- Even when they’re full grown, CM’s seem to radiate an ephemeral sense of youth. In our impatience for instant gratification, they are all too often expected to stand in for slower growing trees that endow a garden with the stability and timeless continuity imparted by Oaks, Beeches, Maples, Sweetgum, Sycamore, and Blackgum, that will still be in their prime when our great grandchildren are parents.



*Redbud and Dogwood*

Here's a selection of better ideas. Throw your own alternatives into the ring!

- Ironwood (*Carpinus caroliniana*)
- River Birch (*Betula nigra*)
- Red Buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*)
- Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)
- Fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*)
- Hawthorn (*Crataegus* x 'Winter King')

Anne Henley, principal of *Liriodendron* in Charlottesville, Va., can be reached at [lirio@mindspring.com](mailto:lirio@mindspring.com), or visit [www.liriodesign.net](http://www.liriodesign.net).



*A grove of Hawthorn in full berry*

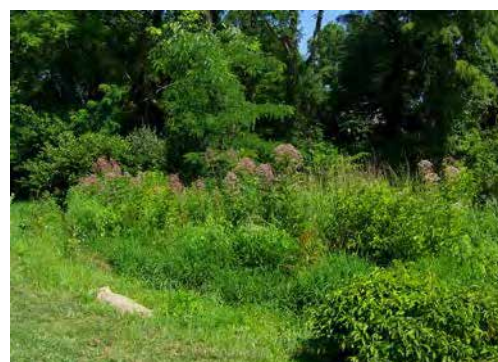
[Reprinted for VSLD Newsletter by permission of the author]

## **At the Intersection of Conservation and Design**

by Chris Coen

One of the things I learned while researching recently was just how much of a perspective shift deliberately designing for pollinators can be – I have my preferred lists of plants to use, as I suppose most of us do, and I was struck by how many of those plants are non-native. And then, of course, there's the realization that even amongst the "native" plants on my preferred list, there are not all that many which are truly native in the sense that they're adapted to Mid-Atlantic conditions.

That set of considerations clashed rather seriously with the design sensibilities I (and most of my clients) bring to a project: I aim for a clean, flowing but not riotous, realistic landscape which will age well. When I look at local native woodland and meadow, however, what I see is far from clean and usually quite undisciplined. No one I know would want their neighborhood to look like an unkempt, uncivilized mess.



But of course use of native plants is not an all-or-nothing proposition. It's a spectrum, I think, and we find each project's place on that spectrum depending on the needs and wants of the client, the property, and our own design sensibilities.

As I pondered this question of the aesthetics of ecology, I thought it might be useful to those of us also thinking about the balance between conservation and design to see how some other designers are tackling the issue and the questions it brings with it. The answers I got, from multiple designers, are summarized below.

**Q: Do you take native plants, and the ecosystem they're a part of and support, into account when designing?**

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Yes, whenever possible; especially for pollinators; sometimes more, sometimes less; if it is a good plant we will use it. Native plants on an "island" of land are pretty much a waste of time if there isn't a way for the creatures to get to them.

**Q: What tools have you used to educate your clients, especially those who might be more resistant to the use of natives and the resultant presence of wildlife (bugs, ick!) in their garden?**

I mainly show photos of the plants and the wildlife that may be attracted to those plants; we talk about using plants that are resistant to pest problems and diseases and we talk about the problems with using chemicals and ways to use better treatments; I tell them what I plan on using before doing the design and if they are resistant, then I don't work for them...the only time it has been an issue is when I am designing around ponds/water ways and people want lawn all the way to the water, which I refuse to do; for [those clients who aren't already native plant enthusiasts], I "sneak" natives into the garden - what they don't know won't hurt them; [I tell them] natives often are more water-wise, which equals less \$\$\$ out of their pockets for replacement and chemicals. They seem to listen with both ears then.

**Q: Do you design specific elements into your landscapes to support native ecosystems? If so, what sorts of elements do you tend to include?**

I use plants to attract butterflies and bees, both nectar and host stages; we try to use plants that encourage pollinators, and I have recommended keeping some native fruiting trees that are normally thought of as weeds, such as wild cherries or amelanchiers; photographs of particularly beautiful or more rare plant species which occur in their specific area (of which seeds, spores, or root systems may just be waiting for opportune conditions) can assist the client in feeling they are helping by providing habitat. I also encourage the conversion of less

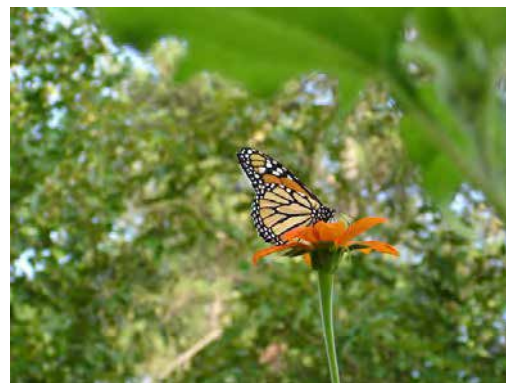
sustainable landscapes, which translate into less time and money in the long run.

**Q: What resources do you recommend for determining which plants are truly native to our area?**

Flora of Virginia; the Virginia Native Plant Society has great publications and opportunities for learning, plus the cost of being a member is towards a good cause; the Virginia DCR website and their lists, which I like because they're organized by regions of Virginia:  
[http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural\\_heritage/nativeplants.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/nativeplants.shtml); <http://www.nps.gov/plants/pubs/chesapeake/pdf/chesapeakenatives.pdf>; honestly, I use Sandy's Plants [nursery] wholesale book a lot.

**Q: What do you think we're missing in this discussion?**

When you actually find someone who knows and wants natives, there aren't enough local nurseries growing enough plants; I try to specify plants that I know the garden centers sell, but it does limit the variety of native plants [I can use]; is it necessary to use only native plants?



Monarch on Tithonia

Photo: Chris Coen

What I think we're missing here is the hook that brings in the large portion of the population, both of designers and clients, who are *not* thinking about ecology at all. To borrow a turn of phrase, the "low-hanging fruit"—those of us who are already considering how to incorporate pollinator-friendly plantings and natives into our water-wise, ecologically-savvy designs—has already been plucked. We're sold. But, what about the rest of

the folks out there? The ones for whom the lowest price is the driving decision point, who buy their plants in big box stores, who want what their neighbor down the street has? How do we reach those people?

I'd love to hear your answers; I really do think we have a role to play, here, and I'd like to see VSLD riding that wave.

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## **Why not Moss?**

by Patty Adkins

Close your eyes for a moment and try to imagine those seemingly carefree afternoons of the Antebellum South at Tara.

The exercise and intended message here suggests tranquility may best be achieved, if not deliciously attained, by viewing that magnificent grassy estate from a gently swaying porch swing, mint julep in hand. Emotionally charged Hollywood scenes such as these from *Gone with the Wind* are deeply embedded in our psyches. Long has it been our love affair with vast sweeping expanses of uninterrupted turf. I am convinced that this particular concept of lavishness and luxury can be traced back to our founding fathers. Bringing it with them, they departed the Old Country to arrive on the shores of America. And truly when we see photos today of notably grand landscapes throughout Europe, at least one image suggests this very idea.

As designers quite often we run into this with our clients. Understandably they too want the beautiful expanse of turf which can provide both recreation and aesthetics. But what comes along with it is a misconception that turf requires less invested care than plantings. However, here in Virginia, we find our soils want to grow nearly anything except a solid carpet of green. In other words, grass does not just happen here. It's true. Well-designed planting beds, water features, walkways and hardscape areas may be utilized as an alternative; but our cultural lust for a well-manicured rolling green seems to surpass them all. Our task then is to satisfy our clientele and attempt to work with nature, not against it, all the while leaning hard towards going green by designing waterwise and chemically responsible landscapes.

We *can* plant one of the oldest plants on the earth. It's been found over 400 million years back in fossil

records. Clearly successful for millennia, moss may not solve all design issues and it's not suggested for an athletic field. Yet if you take a moment to consider the humble moss, one can recognize several components making it a viable alternative. And by replacing a struggling turf with native mosses, the area can literally become nearly a care-free solution. All that's needed is adequate shade, moderately consistent moisture, compacted/nutrient bereft soil (although a good soil is okay too), and the desire to maintain one's yard just a few times a year. Really!

## **A Look at Moss**

What ARE mosses? They are a non-vascular plants, or bryophytes. They don't have seeds, fruit, flowers or true roots. Mosses use cell-to-cell osmosis through leaf and stem to transport nutrients and moisture. Remember, no roots or vascular system. Mature plants are comprised of stems and leaves shaped like fronds, needles or scales. Similar to ferns, they reproduce by sporulation or spread vegetatively via rhizoids. Rhizoids are used to anchor moss to the growing surface. Mosses are found growing on soils, rocks, buildings, trees, roofs and other stationary surfaces. Moss forms a soft mat, but does not necessarily thwart the germination of unwanted seeds. This is due more to the deep shade conditions. Some seeds can and do take root, and if conditions are right, the volunteers will take over. Thus, once or twice a year moss should be weeded and other debris should be removed.

There are many different kinds of mosses and abundant texture types. Two fast, easy to establish growers are sheet moss (*Hypnum sp.*) and fern moss (*Thuidium delicatulum*). These are good to use as a lawn replacement. Some are clumpers (*acrocarps*), but most are flat spreaders (*pleurocarps*). Mosses can receive as little as 2-3 minutes a day of early morning misting to keep it happy and growing. In contrast, a healthy turf needs much more water plus a mowing, seeding and fertilization schedule to keep it in tip top shape. And as for colors, moss comes in an array of colors and hues ranging from silvery-blues to pink tinged, chartreuse-golden to deep greens. Moss is moisture retentive. An established swath will filter run-off water and will hold the soil in place thus helping to reduce erosion. They are a great backdrop against

which to feature shade loving perennials and native ephemerals.

Native mosses are best to use and may be purchased on-line through several east coast sources. Never remove moss from the wild unless the area is being graded for construction. Even then it's best to gain written permission to avoid legal issues or personal injury.

#### Sheet Moss - (*Hypnum*)

This is a versatile, low growing moss/shade plant with a high transplant success rate. Sheet Moss (*Hypnum*) thrives in shade, but will also tolerate partial sunlight— but not direct afternoon sun. This vibrant shade plant's color is medium green.

These unique shade plants are ideal as a ground cover between stepping stones, patio stones, or for any light to medium foot traffic area. Because of its low growth habit, *Hypnum* is the ideal companion plant for highlighting low growing plants such as evergreen groundcovers and delicate native wildflowers. It is also the moss of choice for "moss lawns" or moss paths.

#### Cushion Moss - (*Leucobryum*)

Cushion Moss prefers sandy soil, likes shade, but can tolerate partial sun. This moss is a lighter green color with a silvery-white cast to it. It grows in a round cushion shape,

#### Hair Cap Moss - (*Polytrichum*)

Hair Cap moss has soil anchoring structures that closely resemble and function like roots. For this reason, we ship this species in clumps with soil still attached. Hair Cap moss prefers medium shade to partial sun, and likes clay based and/or sandy soil.

#### Rock Cap Moss - (*Dicranum*)

Rock Cap moss is typically found growing atop rocks and boulders in the wild. This dense, medium to dark-green moss transplants extremely well into shady areas and onto rocks or soil. For even more information about rock garden plants please view the information below.

\*Important: Rock Cap mosses grow in more deeply shaded areas, and are prone to "sun burning" (turning a brownish yellow) following transplanting if they are relocated to an area that receives direct sunlight for periods of more than just a few minutes. They are particularly vulnerable during early spring and late fall before tree leaves have flushed or after they have fallen. Grow this moss in deeper shade and transplant when leaves are on the trees.

#### Moss-oides (look-a-likes)

There are several beautiful moss-like creeping plants available. For starters there's *Selaginella* spp., a pre-historic fern, *Soleirolia soleirolii*, baby tears and *Sagina subulata* 'Aurea', Scotch moss. These each require specific conditions but can be used as substitutes or simply to add variation.

#### Lichens

Similar to mosses and thriving in the same environments, lichens and moss are not related. Lichens are composite organisms formed between fungi and algae or bacteria. Often seen growing on trees, not necessarily the north side, they are confused for parasitic plants. On the contrary, lichens are wonderful havens for beneficial insects and should be left in place. There are many, many textures and brilliant colors to add further interest to a naturalistic landscape.

Here are only a few common lichens:

*Cladonia rangiferina*, reindeer moss

*Cladonia ochrochlora*, powder horn

*Cladonia cristatella*, British Soldiers

*Cladonia subtenuis*, yellow-green

*Xanthoria elegans*, sunburst

*Stereocaulon tomentosum*, woolly foam

*Umbilicaria* ssp, rock tripe

Whether dry and brittle or damp from rain, lichens bring an altogether contrasting texture and color into view. They range from being pollution tolerant to an indicator of good air quality. Lichens are a fascinating subject all on their own and occur on all continents, even Antarctica.

#### Accents

I once knew a lady who gave up on trying to keep moss out of her turf. Her once sunny landscape had matured into a shady glen. She was delighted when, over the next couple years, it became a velvety green sheet. The very next spring a small stand of *Podophyllum* sprang up encircling the edges of what used to be the lawn area. She was no longer discouraged by her inability to keep a strong turf in her yard. She enjoyed the leafy display immensely. Over the next few seasons she also noted the appearance of *Arisaema*, *Trillium*, *Tipularia* and *Botrychium*, along with displays of *Claytonia*, *Ophioglossum* and *Erythronium*, as her landscape began to regain its original natural profile.



She found moss also combined well with other shade-loving perennials like Asarum, Convallaria, Helleborus, Heuchera, Hosta, and many fern species. Together with her designer, she watched as this once eye-sore area became a thing of great beauty and immense pleasure. Finally, she thought, her landscape looked settled and peaceful as if it had existed this way for millennia.

### **Moss Myth Busters**

Myth: Moss needs to have acid soil  
 Debunk: No; it also grows on neutral or alkaline soil

Myth: Moss requires poor, compacted soil  
 Debunk: Not really; it tolerates it but likes good soil too

Myth: Moss grows only in shade  
 Debunk: No; most mosses prefer shade, but some will grow in sun

Myth: Moss needs lots of water  
 Debunk: Not true; although moss grows faster with regular moisture, it tolerates Drought quite well—better than grass does. In dry weather, it will go Dormant and revive when water comes

### **Crib Notes for installation and Care**

1. Determine if the area is culturally correct for growing moss.
2. Make sure surface is cleared of debris, undesirable greenery, is leveled, rolled and made smooth.
  - \* be aware that small depressions will end up collecting debris and/or water, smothering or drowning moss.
  - \*Use a pre-emergent like Preen to discourage germination of any existing seeds (read label first).



Developing area layout for moss Photo" P. Adkins

3. Install any hardscape or greenscape/companion plants prior to moss installation.



Preparation of area for moss Photo: P. Adkins

4. Install moss in pieces or sheets, leaving spaces between moss pieces for outward expansion.



Planted moss area Photo: P. Adkins

5. Water in well and try not to walk on it.

6. Mist or gently spray a couple minutes each day until established (when pulled up gently you find it has attached to growing surface).
7. Once established, continue to mist in warm, dry seasons.
8. DO NOT FERTILIZE. Remember, moss is not like other plants and can be easily damaged.
9. Install stepping stones or other walk path, as its better than walking directly on the moss.
10. Maintenance consists of occasional weeding, litter removal and seasonal leaf removal that can be done easily with a blower, raking is not suggested.
11. Do not use herbicides which can injure or kill the moss outright.
12. Remember moss is slow growing and takes a while to establish, don't grow weary of the wait.

The subject of turf and turf substitutes is one that we will see coming up again and again as our climate continues to change. It is a subject well worth considering. The need for water conservation and the reduction of pesticide use should be of primary concern to us if we are to stay ahead of the curve by cutting maintenance costs for our clientele and promoting a healthier, more natural landscape. Our clients come to us for answers to their problems. We should not have merely standard responses, but creative solutions. It will be with resourceful alternatives that counter the status quo along with a great design which will make us stand out from the crowd.

Good Planting!"

**For more Moss and Lichen Education and resources:**

<http://www.mossacres.com/shade-plants.asp>

<http://www.mossandstonegardens.com/blog/how-to-grow-moss/>

<http://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=CLOC60>

<http://www.borealforest.org/lichens.htm>

[http://www2.crms.uqa.edu/lichens/files/Lichen Guide.pdf](http://www2.crms.uqa.edu/lichens/files/Lichen%20Guide.pdf)

***"The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing."***

- Albert Einstein

## Garden Tour of Pacific Northwest

By Kay Moore

The Robert McDuffie tour of the Pacific Northwest in September of this year showcased beautiful gardens from Portland to Vancouver to Victoria to Seattle and out to Bainbridge Island. The three gorgeous Chinese gardens and the tour Dan Hinkley gave us of his new home and the revitalized Heronswood were highlights of the tour which included 10 days of perfect weather. Twelve consecutive days of rain followed our departure!!



Classical Chinese Garden of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen- Vancouver Photo: K. Moore



Lan Su Chinese Garden Photo: K. Moore





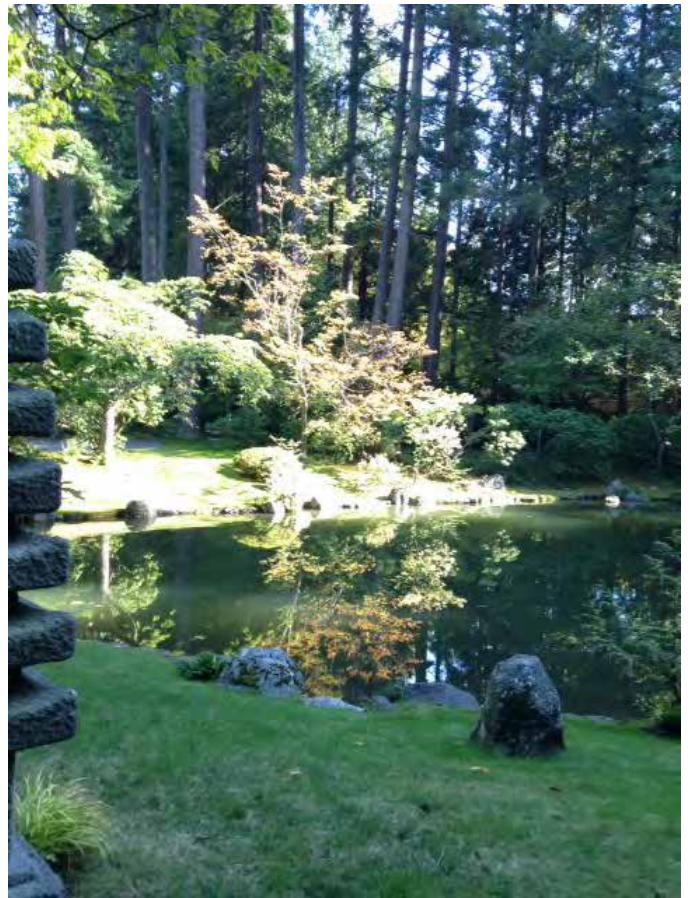
Lan Su Chinese Garden Gate- Portland Photo: K. Moore



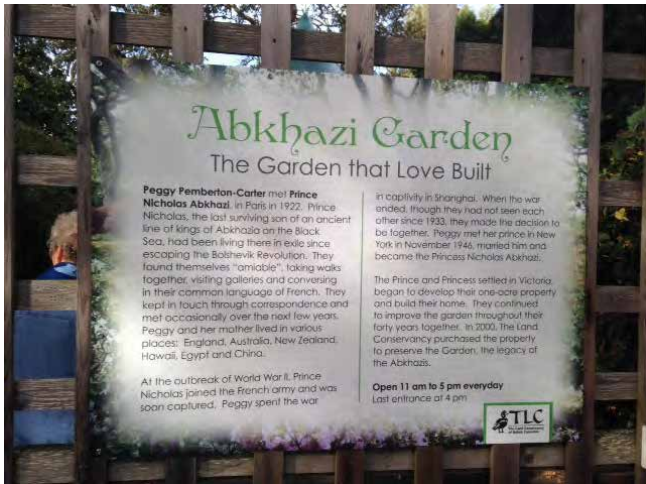
Dan Hinkley Garden- Indianola, WA Photo: K. Moore



Abkhazi Garden- Victoria Photo: K. Moore



Nitobe Memorial Garden- Vancouver Photo: K. Moore



Abkhazi Garden Story Photo: K. Moore

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## REGISTRATION FORM

2015 WINTER MEETING  
Saturday, February 28, 2015  
at the Garden Hall at Maymont in Richmond  
**10AM - 2PM**

VSLD Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ number of reservations @ \$60 for each Member or guest = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Make your check payable to **VSLD**  
and mail it with this registration form to:

VSLD  
C/O Chris Coen  
4752 Old Fredericksburg Road  
Mineral VA 23117

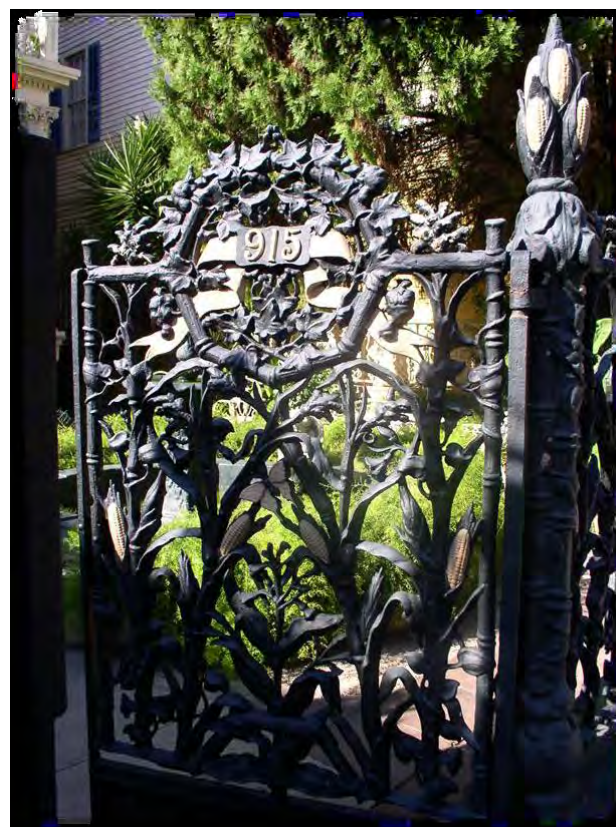
**Please return this form by January 31, 2015**  
For more information call Chris Coen @ 804-475-6767  
*NO REFUNDS*

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Our speaker, professional photographer Ben Greenberg, will lead us in an exploration of how to take award-winning digital photos of our projects. Ben is a lifelong resident of Virginia who moved to Charlottesville for the third time in 2002 after growing up in Richmond and spending most of his adult life there. He has photographed scenic vistas in Virginia, the Mid-Atlantic area, and many other locations in the United States for more than forty years, the last thirty-five as a freelance professional photographer. His carefully crafted landscape photographs have won local as well as national awards and competitions and have been exhibited in numerous individual and group shows.

Please join us at the beautiful Maymont estate to renew old acquaintance and make some new friends! We will also elect our new officers for 2015 during the business meeting, which will be followed by lunch and our guest speaker's presentation. Please bring project portfolios and photos that you would like to share on the display table. Don't forget, you will receive 5 CEUs for attending, and it's also a great time to network. Directions to Maymont's Hampton Street entrance and the Garden Hall are on the Maymont website : <http://www.maymont.org/directions>. We hope to see you all there!

*Here are some of my favorite shots of New Orleans on a recent trip. The colors, architecture, and plant materials are truly unique.....Katie Sokol*





## VSLD Summer Tour: Blacksburg

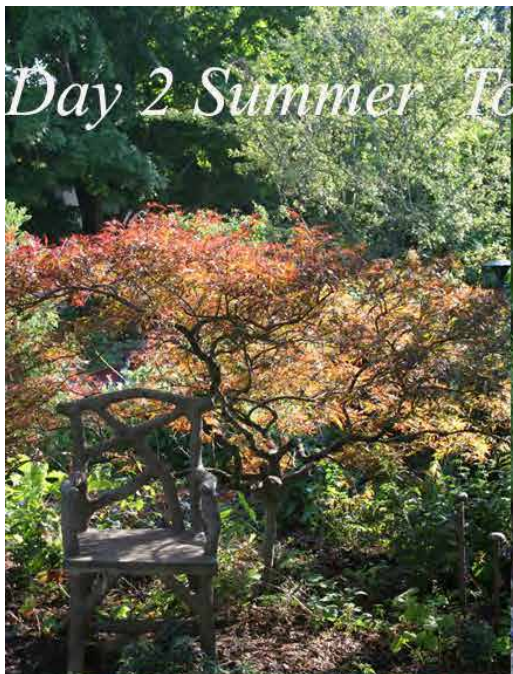


*Day 1 VNLA Field Day - Virginia Tech*





# *Day 2 Summer Tour - Blacksburg Private Gardens*





## Calendar of Events & Meetings 2014-2015

November 12, 2014

**Farmland Film Screening**, Cultural Arts Center; Glen Allen, VA  
Registration at 6:30PM; Screening at 7:00PM; No Cost to attend

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](mailto:info@mants.com) or [www.mants.com](http://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](http://www.mahsc.org)

February 11-13, 2015

**Lewis Ginter Winter Symposium**, LGBG, Richmond, VA  
Ken Druse, Keynote Speaker Feb 12  
Registration opens Dec 01, 2014

February 18, 2015

**Piedmont Landscape Association Seminar**, Charlottesville, VA

February 28, 2015

**VSLD Winter Meeting**, Maymont 10:00 AM-2 PM  
Registration form in newsletter

July 21-23, 2015

**VSLD Summer Tour**, Pennsylvania/Delaware  
Registration forms avail. at VSLD Winter Meeting

## Officers & Directors 2014

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