



Friends of the Hort Farm

2023 – The Year of Construction and Disruption and way too much rain!

Between the impossibly weird weather—first a very dry spring, to a soaking in August into September, it’s been a strange year for plants and gardens.

Mind you, the invasives had a field day with the rain. Growing bigger and better than ever. We need more workdays to clean those rascals out of our gardens. For the volunteers who came to help clean out the invasives during our non-rained out workdays — a huge thank you. We made some serious progress.

We participated in the Vermont Flower Show in early March, with Joanne Cummings designing and creating a terrific booth. We even had a great spot to showcase our work and encourage visitors to join up.

Our events were well attended through the year. Mostly, the weather cooperated. Our plant sale was successful, with many plants sold out quickly. The left-overs were donated to EMG projects hit by the floods.

Unfortunately, our scheduled pollinator garden workday for October was postponed due to more rain, only to be canceled for the new date due to even more rain! Is there someone we can talk to about this?

There will be changes to the grounds of the Hort Farm as more classroom space is added with a new pavilion being built where the old wooden pavilion used to be across from the Blasburg building.

Our two pollinator garden curators, Charlotte Albers, and Debbie Page stepped down this year, as well as Debbie leaving the board.

Mark Twery has answered the call to join our board. He is always working in the collections at the Hort Farm and has been for years. He has propagated several lilacs and replanted them, as well as attempting to rescue other that may be beyond help. You never know. We can’t thank him enough.

On a sad note, one of our founders, Stephanie Miner passed away. The FHF held a celebration of her life in September. She is one of the reasons the Friends of the Hort Farm exists.

Hope to see you in the collections next year.

Kitty and Hayley, Co-presidents



Our booth at the Vermont Flower Show

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Autumn 2023

Editors: Dorothy Lovering
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Events and Programs

English Gardens, Carnivorous Plants, Mosses and Liverworts highlighted our list of programs this past year.

Dorothy Lovering

Our first program started the year off sweeping us away from the cold of February to warm afternoons in two beautiful English gardens, courtesy of Charlotte Albers.

Then, after months of planning with guidance from volunteer Joanna Cummings and girded ironwork “walls” from Jen Mills for our booth, on March 3, we exhibited at the revived VNLA Vermont Flower Show. Despite a major winter storm on opening day, the exhibition hall was crowded. We offered short Curator Chats with Terry Bradshaw and Paul Wiczoreck, several raffles, and our live, 4-foot, friendly “Venus Flytrap Plant” wandered around with our booth number on him, courtesy of Max Hornus. Our volunteers greeted people, answered questions, handed out 520 brochures and helped 239 people sign up for raffles. A job well done.



Our annual pruning programs of crabapples and ornamental shrubs and trees, guided by Coyote Biercevicz and Tom Shea, continues to teach pruning techniques to gardeners.

In May, Biologist Lindsey Pett brought trays of car-

nivorous plants and a lively discussion on owning and caring for such plants in your home. This was followed by a program on Mosses and Liverworts by author Sue Williams. Of course, May also brought our popular program on lilacs with curator (and co-president) Kitty Werner explaining why we all need lilacs in our landscapes.

Bloom Time remains a favorite event and continues to grow. We had curators at collections to talk about the plants, a Woodland Walk Tour with Gracie Lawrence and one of her brothers, more activities for kids, and a speaker on saving biodiversity and ecosystems. Our traditional plein air artists, face painter, and Ukulele Band, Women of UVM Ladies of the Uke, returned.

June displayed our abundant collection of rhododendrons and a walk and discussion about growing them with curator Paul Wiczoreck. Also in June, the class in Leaf Casting by Nancy Simson and Margaret Foster taught several people how to make beautiful garden sculptures to take home.

Of course, our Annual Plant Sale brought us a bountiful collection of plants from our donors, and seasoned volunteers joined with new volunteers to call on donors, pick up plants, mark the prices, and work the many jobs that our biggest fundraiser requires.

In September we walked with Ethan Tapper through the Hort Farm forests to discover why our trees are so important to the land and to those of us who walk the land. Creating a Winter Centerpiece will top off our programs on December 2 at the Farm. This is another popular program, and we look forward to ending our year with elegant winter bouquets for our holiday celebrations.

To be able to do all these programs requires the dedication and commitment of our many volunteers. Their work helps make the Friends of the Hort Farm successful. Many thanks to all of them.

Stephanie Miner

Sadly, we say goodbye to our friend Stephanie Miner. Stephanie was a dear friend, a constant volunteer, seeker of new volunteers, encourager, and always open to new ideas. In today's world, she would be called an influencer.

Wherever she went, whatever organization she joined, she made new friends. Many of whom eventually showed up as volunteers for the Hort Farm. She was a tireless promoter of The Friends. With her knowledge of the Friends history, and growth, she could easily tell you what was going on, welcome you in as a new member, and very shortly invite you to be a volunteer. Which of course led to a sincere commitment on your part.

Stephanie loved her gardens. If you visited her in warm weather seasons, she would invite you to see her gardens, where she knew the names of every plant and every tree. It was an education to take a Stephanie Garden Tour.

We at the Friends consider Stephanie one of our founders, along with her husband, Don Miner who left us two years ago. They, along with a small group of friends and neighbors, organized the Friends of the Horticulture Farm 29 years ago to protect the Hort Farm's collection of plants and offer educational programs about horticulture and gardening to everyone. The Friends of the Hort Farm are fortunate to have this legacy.

The Friends of the Hort Farm held a celebration of the life of Stephanie Miner at the Hort Farm on September 23rd.



Andy Bissette, the almost-completely retired HF manager tells of his working with Stephanie.



Terry Bradshaw, above, sharing his memories of working with Stephanie.

Pollinator Garden Update



Debbie Page, Co-Curator

Many thanks to the volunteers who came to the spring clean-up. The Pollinator Garden has never looked lovelier. The plants have really filled in especially the asters and grasses. Unfortunately, the first autumn clean-up was canceled as the rain just wouldn't let up. Our next scheduled date is this weekend, and not looking too good either. We'll see.

As to the future of the pollinator garden, initially, the plan going forward was to have the Future Farmers program take over the current Pollinator Garden

by moving most of the plants farther back near their pavilion, and within their crops where pollination is needed. But interest our in plants disappeared over the summer leaving the FHF plants to move to our future garden behind the lilacs and our new pavilion built last year with the Wiggins fund.

A new UVM teaching pavilion is scheduled to go in near the present site and there will be digging during the construction. While the garden itself may not be too disturbed until we are ready to move it..

Cary Garden Update



Jim Hayden, curator

The big news for the Cary Garden this year was installation of the new water line for the farm. The path for the line passed directly through the Cary Garden and in the process, two large specimens needed to be removed — the large Fothergilla and the Korean Fir. Admittedly, these were probably the two plants in the worst shape in the collection. Additionally, a few specimens were heavily trimmed back and a number of identification signs were lost.

We were lucky that our Rhododendron and Conifer Curator Paul Wiczoreck came to the rescue, finding

replacements for both of these plants in his private collection and planting them himself using his personal mini-excavator. Thanks Paul! Terry Bradshaw agreed the Farm could reimburse Paul and that he could have students re-lay the bluestone path after harvest was complete.

Other than this excitement, it was a quiet year for the garden where we largely kept up with invasives. Next year, we can perhaps take on the raspberries along the north wall of the Blasberg Building and maybe again think about adding to the collection.



Lilac Collection Update

Kitty Werner, curator

After a vigorous clean-up of the lilacs in April, May's lilacs were stunning. Just before the lilacs truly bloomed, Keith Silva of WCAX's popular [Across the Fence](#) visited the lilacs and interviewed me as we walked through the lilacs, highlighting my favorites. Please don't laugh too hard. Waitsfield's local access channel MRVTV had their go at the lilacs as well. You can watch that one [here](#). Our lilacs are rather popular?

For years, we've held clean-up workdays in April and September or October, yet we come back a month or so later to find the lilacs overwhelmed again. We clean them out, the invasives return.



Don cleaned out this area completely. A first. Thank you!



Spring Clean up after clearing mounds of bittersweet out

Unfortunately, the heavy rains in August and September didn't help the invasive situation. A quick visit through the lilacs after Ethan Tapper's woods walk



After cutting out bittersweet from the front lilac and the one behind, look at the piles of vines. Yet, there are more invasives left to remove from the third lilac.

event, before our workday in late September, showed vines completely overwhelming many of our plants.

The volunteers were so effective that many of the lilacs that had "disappeared" under vines, or had been hidden by grasses, were liberated. Let's hope they stay that way.

However, there are many more invasives to obliterate: a black locust towering above one big lilac, smaller trees growing among two groups of lilacs in row 4, not to mention the endless supply of grapevines, bittersweet and buckthorn.

I hope to make another visit to the lilacs before the snow flies to kill off some of the small trees growing in the lilacs in row 4 before they get a chance to overwhelm the neighboring lilacs.

On a bright note, just maybe, our dying S18-96 lilac — one that is literally the only one left anywhere as it was never propagated beyond this one, may have a sprout. It does have the tag for S18-96 on it, but we'll know in the spring. It is rather unusual, isn't it? Hope it survives. Charles Joly has been moving over into S18-96's space. Naughty Charles! We'll know in May if it is another Charles Joly or S18-96.



S18-96