



# Friends of the Hort Farm

## 2025 – A Year of Additions

For the last two years, a memorial garden to remember Stephanie and Don Miner has been in the planning stages. This year, the planning and work paid off—the garden is in and more plants are coming next year! The story is inside.

So what do you do when all your spring events are planned for Saturdays, and every one of them will be rained out? Adjust! For months, the Miner Memorial Garden workdays scheduled for Saturdays did just fine on Sundays.

One event we didn't reschedule was the Bloom Time Festival. But fortunately, the new pavilion provided the space we needed to celebrate Bloom Time in style. Although, it was a bit wet if you ventured outside. Leading *All About Lilacs* between "sprinkles" was a challenge. A group of us would head out to the lilacs, do a quick tour, then dash back to the pavilion before the downpour started again.

We've been so fortunate to have volunteers come help in the Miner Memorial Garden, as well as work in the lilacs, rhodies and pollinator garden this year. It's been a tough year all around and we are grateful. Thank you!

Kitty and Hayley  
Co-presidents

## JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING

**ANNUAL MEETING — via Zoom**  
**Saturday, Nov 22, 10 a.m.–noon**

Zoom Link for the meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8011081890?pwd=ak1XbmprdBjUQnRZOWszWU91VHdyUT09&omn=85737798612>

1. Call to order
2. Motion to approve last year's annual meeting minutes.
3. Treasurer's Report
  1. Committee Reports
    - Collections — brief reports herein
    - Events and programs
  1. New Business
    - Election of Officers
  2. Comments from membership
  3. Appreciations
  4. Meeting adjourn

## Contents

Events Recap  
Miner Memorial Garden  
Updates from our Collections

## Autumn 2025

Editors: Dorothy Lovering  
Kitty Werner

Friends of the Horticultural Farm  
65 Green Mountain Drive  
South Burlington, Vermont

# Events and Programs 2025 recap

## Winter

Our year started with the Vermont Flower Show in early March. We had another great location with lots of visitors to our booth. Fourteen wonderful volunteers stepped forward to help us hand out brochures and talk with the public.

As in every year, our pruning programs were a success, although we had to make a schedule change on one, due to the weather. Pruning branches in the pouring rain is not recommended!

## Spring

With the warmer weather of spring, we returned to work on the Miner Memorial Garden, spending hot sunny Saturdays digging weeds, mixing in compost, mulching paths, and finally putting in some plants. With Master Gardener volunteers and others helping, we have a great beginning on the garden. And much still to do in 2026.



Tackling the crabgrass! Don't look and it grows "overnight."

Successful turnouts showed up for our programs on "Managing Invasive Pests and Diseases in Your Garden" and "Identifying and Managing Invasive Plant Species". Gardeners seem very aware of the changes in pests and diseases that have come with climate changes.



Inside the new pavilion during the Bloom Time Festival rain

Our annual Bloom Time Festival was also affected by heavy spring rain. Although those who took shelter in the Hort Farm's new pavilion enjoyed the event. And some with the heart of a child really enjoyed the rain!



The rain just didn't matter!

## Summer

Our major fundraiser, the Annual Plant Sale, was another success. We thank all the generous nurseries who consistently support us with their donations. Thanks also go to our loyal members and the public who attended and went home with beautiful plants for their gardens.



## Fall to Winter

Our last program of 2025 is the Winter Centerpiece, scheduled for December 6 at the Hort Farm. Class limit is 12, so be sure to sign up early.

## Come Join in

Another staple of our work at the Hort Farm is the schedule of Workdays throughout the spring and summer. With several plant collections to care for, we need help from as many volunteers as possible. Working with a Master Gardener or FHF plant curator offers an opportunity for volunteers who want to learn from them while helping to prune, dig weeds, and meet new friends.

## PROGRAMS FOR 2026

We are working on our 2026 list of programs and events and will include our favorites—pruning, growing and caring for lilacs, rhododendrons and pollinators, managing diseases, pests and invasives, attracting beneficial insects to your garden, our Bloom Time Festival and Plant Sale events, and much more.



# The Miner Memorial Garden

The Miner Memorial Garden is in! Well, much of it. And, as of October 25, it is put to bed for the winter. Our crew deserves the winter rest!

Judith Irven designed the style of the original garden, dividing it into four individual sections. Dorothy Lovering designed the placement of plants in the four smaller gardens and selected the plants to go there from our pollinator garden, and contributions from Sarah Salatino's Full Circle Gardens, and Stephanie's garden

The walkways were laid out in May over several Sundays as Saturdays were rain days. But after two weekends off (Bloom Time Festival and Plant Sale events), we went back to find those teeny remnants of crabgrass were now covering all the garden areas completely, as well as being above our knees. That day was spent cleaning up the crabgrass instead of our planned "laying out the gardens" to ready them for planting.



Digging out the crabgrass: Mark Twery, Dorothy Lovering, Kate Schubart, Tim Higgins, Charlie Lawrence, Jen Lawrence

We have been blessed with a great crew who showed up regularly: Mark Twery (project coordinator), Dorothy Lovering, Tim Higgins, Jane Earnshaw, Jen and Charlie Lawrence, board members, and aided by Extension Master Gardener interns earning more hours towards their certificate. As a group—we worked on Saturdays and/or Sundays from May into October save for 3 event weekends off.



UVM ROTC crew: front row from left to right: Gracie Lawrence, Sophia Gaff, Morgan Koester, Val Paladino, Joshua Brogi; back row: Liam Donlan, Ethan St.Pierre and Mark Twery.

Jane Earnshaw came mid-week as well as weekends, cleaning out invasive vines from the trees and shrubs around the area. She donated shrubs to the Miner Memorial Garden. She's been an amazing help all summer.

Jen and Charlie Lawrence, the current owners of the Miner's former home, have been instrumental in helping this garden happen, having supplied many plants from their garden as well as working tirelessly in the garden. One Friday, Jen cleaned out the crabgrass from the two benches and laid down wood chips around them—on a "day off."

September 13, Jen and Charlie's daughter Gracie and her UVM ROTC crew moved a truckload of compost onto each of the 4 gardens and tilled it in along with Mark, Hayley, Dorothy, Tim, who then "heeled" in numerous plants collected for the garden to be planted in the spring. We added interior walkways for weeding within the 4 gardens.

The next workdays were spent planting what we have.



# Lilac Collection Update

Kitty Werner, curator

The lilacs were hit, yet again, by the lilac leaf blight you've seen around this year and last on lilacs throughout the state. The cause is a combination of the wet springs, hot weather, and then the leftover fallen leaves from the year before. We just don't have the ability to clean out all the affected lilacs to stop this.

The blight decimated quite a few of our collection. In 2023, 'Alphonse Lavallee' was an enormous lilac covered with blooms. Last year's blight killed more than half of the plant. The same with most of the other lilacs.

Our Spring newsletter had the story of the International Lilac Society's Josh Miller's visit and tour of the lilacs. Josh had noted there were plenty of healthy sprouts hidden in the grass and invasives around those unhealthy-looking lilacs. Since then, we've had a few more workdays to do more cleaning around some of the lilacs, especially the 'Alphonse Lavallee' in row 2. The dead canes were taken out, the grasses and invasive bitersweet removed, and as Josh said—there were plenty

of shoots coming up.

One lilac I've been working to save for years, S18-96, was never propagated but always brings "oh, wow!" to anyone who sees the blooms—when it was big enough to do so. In May, there were two small shoots I had hoped survived, but they hadn't. Again, as Josh noted in May, there was a healthy sprout growing up from the original stem. In October, there were *five* healthy shoots. Mark



S18-96

Twery dug one up to preserve it. If it survives, Josh has another lilac to take to the ILS preservation arboretum.

To my great surprise and joy, so many of the smaller lilacs we thought were dead had new shoots growing from the "dead" plant. It will take years for them to get to flowering size—if the blight has run its course.

Mark Twery has propagated quite a few plants over the years giving us four more lilacs to add to the collection. Between his efforts and year-end sale purchases of lilacs from Gardener's Supply, we've added more lilacs to the collection. This year, 'Equinox Valley', 'Declaration', and 'New Age White' were planted on October 25 along with four that Mark propagated. We did make sure (we hope) that none were planted anywhere near where bitersweet is thriving. Unfortunately, the labels Mark made for his "babies" didn't survive the growing seasons. They will be something to watch for as they bloom in the future.



'Alphonse Lavallee' before cleaning



'Alphonse Lavallee' as Bob Little Tree is working on it



Here are 2 of Mark's lilacs with the flags. They are tiny. >

# Collections Review

One of our big issues with the collections is simply lack of attention to their care. And why? Not enough time or volunteers. This seriously needs to change.

## Pollinator Garden

Aside from two clean-up workdays nothing much as happened in the pollinator garden. Some of the plants will be moved to the Miner Memorial Garden as more plants are added next spring. It has been put to bed for the winter.

## Cary Garden



Before the tear-up -- there's the pipe

Several years ago piping and wiring was run through the Cary Garden to the new pavilion that removed five plants and the stepping stones. To this date, one plant was replaced, but the stones are still stacked awaiting return to their original place.

The workday was shared with the pollinator garden but the few people worked in the pollinator garden.

## Rhododendrons & Conifers



Two workdays were held, but only a few people showed up to help either day. The poor plants are covered with grapevines and bittersweet and desperately need lots of love and care. Mind you, this is the biggest collection in the Northeast. Help us save this collection by volunteering on our workdays! It would be most appreciated.

## A Message To Our Members

Every year, the Friends of the Hort Farm care for plants we call “the collections”. This is part of our mission—to care for and protect the collections and educate our members and the general public on horticulture and gardening.

For a couple of hours on spring and fall weekends, we recruit volunteers to our “workdays” to work in our collections—pull weeds, prune branches, cut back vines and attack the invasive bittersweet that ravages many of the plants. There are 108 lilacs and at least 35 rhododendrons desperate for help, not to mention the conifer collection being revitalized.

Unfortunately, the collections need more help than we can give them without more volunteer help. And this is just part of the FHF mission.

Your board meets monthly to go over all the other areas we are working on. Here is a list of where we need help.

- suggestions for the annual program calendar
- volunteer facilitators at programs given at the Hort Farm
- writing stories for the newsletters
- two event chairs to work on the Bloom Time Festival together
- picking up plants, contacting nurseries, etc., for the annual plant sale
- listing our events in Front Porch Forum
- work on the Miner Memorial Garden
- putting together our exhibit for the next Flower Show (scheduled for 2027).

In addition to volunteering for the above, you can see that we also need more members on the board to help us make these decisions.

As a member of the FHF, you are part of the organization. Because your board cannot do all this alone, we are asking you to Become An Active Member and be part of the process. If you have the time and interest to help your organization, please contact Kitty Werner, [kwerner@wcvr.com](mailto:kwerner@wcvr.com), or Hayley Hornus, [Hayley.hornus@gmail.com](mailto:Hayley.hornus@gmail.com), or talk to us at the Annual Meeting on Saturday, Nov. 22.

## Become an Active Member