



Friends of the Hort Farm

2026 – A Year of Volunteers

This year's annual meeting will be a big change—in venue and being in-person again. Join us at the Lawrence's home at 5 Deerfield Rd, South Burlington, the former home of Stephanie and Don Miner. How appropriate. There will be lunch as well as the meeting. Don't miss it! But please register as we need to know how many to feed!

The biggest project of the year was the Miner Memorial Garden. After two years of planning and prepping for the flowers, the Miner Memorial Garden is alive and full of flowers! So many amazing volunteers came to help clean out the unrelenting crabgrass, pull out errand weeds, and plant the flowers. We can't thank you enough. There's still more to do to finish the area, but now we have a glorious garden.

On a sad note, due to her overwhelming workload and commitments, Hayley is leaving the board as of this annual meeting. She will be much missed.

A special thank you to Jane Earnshaw, who single-handedly cleared much of the conifer collection behind the lilacs of invasive vines. You can actually see trees! Her tactics are so good, the trees are still just trees — no vines. Thank you, Jane!

(Now, if we could just clean out the poor lilacs as effectively.)

Kitty and Hayley
Co-presidents

JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING

11 – 1 p.m.

5 Deerfield Rd, South Burlington

Vote for the board! Deadline Nov 6.

To register to join person:

<https://fhfvt.org/events/annual-meeting-2026/>

To join via Zoom at 12:30

<https://shorturl.at/cJA34>

1. Call to order
2. Motion to approve last year's annual meeting minutes. (See page 7 for the link to approve, or not, the 2025 minutes.)
 1. Treasurer's Report
 2. Committee Reports
 - Collections — brief reports herein
 - Events and programs
 3. New Business
 - Election of Officers — page 7 for link
 4. Comments from membership
 5. Appreciations
 6. Meeting adjourns

Contents

Updates from our Collections
Your Board Members & Voting
Financials

Autumn 2026

Editors: Dorothy Lovering
Kitty Werner

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



The Miner Memorial Garden 2026

Mark Twery, MMG Lead

The Miner Memorial Garden spent the winter of 2025-26 quietly, with many of the beds buried under cardboard, because the garden had been left only partially planted at the end of the 2025 season.



The first garden workday was April 11, when we started removing the cardboard, pulling the early-bird weeds, and planting the donated items that had overwintered in pots. The paths were in decent shape.



We had more workdays weeding and planting in April and May and the garden showed signs of life.

Our FHF Intern, Francis Adams, started work in mid-May and provided much-needed labor, including laying out and installing the gathering circle at the south end of the MMG.

June provided opportunities for 3 workdays, planting, weeding, mulching, and watering. By the end of June, there was plenty of evidence of progress.



The Gathering Circle, June 3, 2026. Thank you, Francis!



July saw a break for the annual plant sale, but the crabgrass took no break, so we were back at it later in the month, continuing to weed, plant, mulch, and water.



As you can see, the crabgrass just doesn't quit.



Donated and purchased plants continued to arrive through August, when we saw many of the shrubs and trees arrive and the late-season perennials start to bloom.



By September, the garden was looking magnificent with a profusion of fall bloomers.

There is always more to do, with ongoing maintenance such as watering and weeding. We still need to complete the gathering circle with its rock "benches," place a few more large shrubs around the perimeter, and install informational pieces about butterflies, toads, and other focal areas within the garden.

Our own Dorothy Lovering spent hours designing and redesigning the layout of the plants. Not all went according to plan. But the result is a feast for your eyes.

To our many volunteers who showed up through blistering hot mornings to get this garden done. We couldn't have done this without you.

Many thanks to the Extension Master Gardeners



who have contributed greatly to the project. As this is a Northwest EMG project, many earned enough hours to shed the "intern badge" and become full EMGs. Congratulations to them!

On October 21, Brian Vaughan and Mark Twery worked with Jen and Charlie Lawrence to retrieve 5 large stones from the Lawrence's property adjacent to the Hort Farm. Brian and his tractor moved the stones and Mark helped place them around the gathering circle. The garden is now fully to bed for the season.



Now, we can relax until next April, when it is time to wake up the garden for 2027. Thank you our wonderful volunteers



Lilac Collection Update

Kitty Werner, curator

Our April workdays saw much clean-up with ten volunteers cleaning out the leftover and early invasives. Piles were everywhere around the lilacs.

We were fortunate to have DynaPower's crew come work in the lilacs again in May. Once again they not only cleaned out the invasives but pruned, cleaned up around the plants and added plenty of wood chips around many of the lilacs. Not surprisingly, the lilacs showed off their blooms two weeks later to the delight of more than a few visitors.



The wood chip pile before they started.



The wood chip pile at the end of the day.

We had more workdays, but definitely not enough of them. With all the rain this spring, the invasives had a grand time crawling up the lilac canes and engulfing the poor plants. Come June, the vines were back.

Ashley Rooks brought a handy tool with her that we just had to try out on some dead canes—a battery-powered hand pruner with an extending pole to reach where we couldn't easily get to before.

So impressed by this magnificent tool, we bought one for our collections. Our intern, Francis Adams, used it to great effect this summer.

During our workdays, the piles of dead canes became bigger and more impressive, while the lilacs looked a bit more “airy”?

Our June workday had Marie Ambusk (below) teaching proper pruning technique to our volunteers before they got to work.



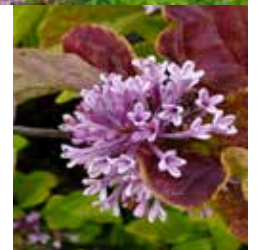
Well, of course, blight will make its way into the lilacs again. There's no way to clean up the debris fall from the previous year. But, the lilacs still bloom and surprise us.

For the record, there are several stunning lilacs that bloom later in the year. In June, *persica Laciniata* and *persica pinnatifolia* explode in blooms.



In October, the *meyerii* bloom again. And we have 3 of these re-blooming lilacs.

There's always something going on in the lilacs.





Cary Garden Update

In 2026 the main development in the Cary Garden was the restoration of the stepping stone path. The stones had been removed in recent years to allow for underground lines to be run to the newly built classroom pavilion. This year our intern, Francis Adams, worked with Jim Hayden to determine where to put the path. Then Francis and Brian Vaughan placed the stones, set them into the ground, and restored the path leading from the road to the bench in the middle of the Cary Garden.



Before the pipes were laid

Francis Adams, FHF Intern for 2026

The Friends have numerous tasks to accomplish at the Hort Farm every year, but we always seem to be short-handed. In 2026, the Friends were able to use some new funds and some funds that had been retained by UVM to hire a field intern from mid-May to Mid-August. Francis Adams was the UVM student who filled that position, and he did a marvelous job. Francis was active helping to clean up the pollinator garden, reset the walkway into the Cary garden, weed the collections of lilacs and conifers, and assist in the establishment and improvement of the Miner Garden. Francis also assisted with the annual plant sale in July and tackled many other tasks. He always maintained a positive attitude to the work and did not have to wait for assignments—when one task was finished, he moved on to another one. Francis was a great asset to the Friends this year. We hope to have him back with us next year.

“So Many New Friends!”

Those were the comments of one of the volunteers in the Miner Memorial Garden this summer. It seems that more than flowers were blooming in the garden.

Over the years, the Friends of the Hort Farm have been graced with dedicated volunteers who have helped care for our collections, traveled to pick up plants for our plant sale, and worked at our events. One of the side effects of volunteering with a group new to you is the opportunity for friendships to grow.

After pulling up crabgrass from the garden plots on many weekends in 2025, this year volunteers worked to finish pulling weeds and prepare the soil for planting.

On one Saturday morning, after two hours of work in the hot sun, a volunteer asked if we could do it again next Saturday. Quickly, other volunteers spoke up for another commitment to the next weekend. The calendar was free, we held another (unplanned) workday the next Saturday and everyone came back to work!

Knowing that workers work best on food, Melissa Donahue brought a delicious coffee cake one weekend and Jen Lawrence brought tasty muffins on other workdays. Finally, volunteers set over 200 plants in their new homes. The rewards came this late summer when shastas, asters, coneflowers and more bloomed in the sunny, summer days. You can find photos and descriptions of work dates chronologically on our website under Miner Garden.

Our wonderful volunteers came from: board members, longtime friends of the FHF, The UVM ROTC Cadets, “Catamount Civic Corp” courtesy of Gracie Lawrence, the Northwest Chapter of EMGs and interns, the Lawrence Family, our student intern Francis Adams, and like the fabled cobbler and the elves, some volunteers came during the week days to pull weeds?!

We have been very lucky to have generous plant contributions from several sources: Sarah Salatino of Full Circle Gardens, Kyle Albee, Jane Earnshaw, Jen and Charlie Lawrence (whose plants once belonged to Stephanie Miner), Marge Westphal (Stephanie’s friend, courtesy of Ann Pearce), several plants from the FHF Pollinator Garden, and board members. Benches were contributed by Kitty Werner.

We are on our way to a formal Miner Memorial Garden. Next year we will finish the Circle, a welcome center area, set up pollinator information, add any plants we might need for “holes”, and add bulbs for 2028. Join us next spring. Thank you plant contributors and volunteers! See you in 2027.

Annual Meeting November 22, 2025 10 a.m.

Attending: Mark Twery, Jen Lawrence, Tim Higgins, Dorothy Lovering, Hayley Hornus, Kitty Werner, Nancy Simson, Ann Milovsoroff

Approving last year's meeting minutes: Approved. Nancy offered, Mark and Tim seconded.

2026 program update

This is Dorothy's last meeting as a board meeting. We will have a proper thank you TBA. Big thank you from Nancy.

Dorothy brought us up to date on the planned programs. Houseplants with Will Creed if he can. February: Sarah Salatino on Insects, VJ Comei on pruning, Coyote on crabapples, April is workdays, All About Lilacs May 16, BTF May 23, Rhoddie W&T, Mark's invasives, July 11 Plant Sale...

We are short on programs, only 10, not usual 15. Looking for more programs. For the Native plants, Jen suggested including the Scouts as they must learn 10 native plants. Contact Deb Heleba about speakers for invasive "things" — Mark suggested an entomologist.

Ann Hazelrigg for pests? Dorothy would like a program on native grasses.

MMG update

Mark Twery shared his slide show on the MMG. Nancy suggested we have this as a program. Jen suggested using the UVM ROTC to help in the collections. Nancy asked about signage for the MMG. Dorothy said we are planning to do extensive signs. As Mark said, there are plans. Nancy asked about a budget for the MMG, Mark explained we haven't had a budget allocated.

New Business

Nancy asked about the plant sale. We need to ask Tanya for a breakdown of expenses. Nancy wouldn't approve the financials as we don't have proper allocations.

Jen offered an idea to host a day-long native plant program for the public. Jen and Charlie could do a program on geology/hydrology in garden. Perhaps do this at Bloom Time.

Adjourned: 11:03 a.m.



Nancy Simson, Linda Elrick, and John Simson at Bloom Time

John Simson

The Friends lost a dear member recently when John Simson passed. John touched so many parts of the Friends organization over the years: president, board member, and last but not least, plant sale nursery picker. John (and his wife, Nancy—also a FHF longtime member/volunteer) picked plants for more nurseries than one person seemed able to do, but he packed his car every year and amazed us all with how many trips he could fit in! John has been an integral part of the Friends and we will miss him dearly.

Please find his obituary here:

<https://www.mykeeper.com/johnsimson>



Friends Annual Plant Sale

A huge thanks to all the annual Plant sale volunteers, who traveled near and far to gather all our nursery friends' donations! Every year, this dedicated group of volunteers packs their cars with plants that generous nurseries around Vermont donate to our annual Friends fund raiser. Additionally, volunteers and board members staff the sale and help our shoppers with invaluable plant knowledge and advice. Thanks to all who help put on the event.