



Heather Notes

Volume 2

Number 1

Spring

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Northeast Heather Society

1992

In Brief

220 members paid up

Suggest a future meeting site

Recruit new members

Contribute to your newsletter

Spring Meeting to be Held at Smith College

by Will Clarke

The Spring meeting of the Northeast Heather Society will be held on Saturday, May 2, 1992 in the Lyman Plant House which is located on the grounds of Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts. The starting time will be 11:00 a.m. and, as usual, members and guests should bring their own lunches. The program for the meeting is to present companion plants in the rock garden and Dick Munson, our host at the college, would like for us to visit their wildflower garden if the weather is suitable.

Thanks to Kate Herrick's generosity, the NEHS now owns a copy of Gardening in New England by Marion Schroeder. Besides including such outstanding destinations for gardeners as Rock Spray Nursery and the Botanic Garden of Smith College are the following entries for western and central Massachusetts. Although some of the places listed may be quite a distance from Northampton, they might be "on the way" as you travel to or from the meeting.

Pleasant Valley Glads
413- 786-9146

163 Senator Ave./PO Box 494
Agawam, MA 01001
Gladiolus and Dahlia specialists.

Bartholomew's Cobble
413- 229-8600
Weatogue Rd./ PO Box 128
Ashley Falls, MA 01222
"...a natural rock garden of ferns and rare wildflowers."

Hartman's Herb Farm
508-355-2015
Old Dana Rd.
Barre, MA 01005
Outstanding Herbs and Perennials.

Ludlow Herb Farm
413- 589-9875
943 Center St. (Rt. 21)
Lulow, MA 10156
Herbs and Perennials.

Gladside Gardens
413-498-2657
61 Main St.
Northfield, MA 01360
Gladioli and Dahlias.

Triple Brook Farm
413- 527-4626

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From Your Editor

For this issue I have plenty of room to write but something of a writer's block and both Kate and Walter have been pressing me for the copy. As many of you know, I had not been feeling well for almost a year when I was hospitalized in January. It is a relief to find out, at long last, that my chronic infection was not only respiratory but also intestinal and I am still learning to cope with the regime of a bad gut.

I missed the winter meeting but Greta and Will's accounts of it gave me a sense of being there. I am disappointed that more of you didn't heed my urgings via Kate to write for this newsletter. Comments on your garden, the weather, travels, related plant material and tips or techniques would certainly add to it. Many short pieces can be combined with others to fill column inches. I decipher long hand, shorthand and Walter's typing with an old, faint ribbon but if you use a computer, it would save me a lot of time if your material came on a 3.5 inch disk with a paper copy as a back up.

I miss Cape Cod and my heathers but so far I have only sold one of Brandy's puppies and it requires just too much effort and energy to travel with three puppies and three adult dogs for the weekend. My recent ad in the NY Times produced no response and the local referrals I have gotten haven't amounted to sales either. The way things are going, the heathers may have to skip their yearly trim because I might not get to the Cape before summer.

Speaking of Cape Cod, Rock Spray took a top prize at the Boston Flower Show. Kate has been so busy at the nursery that she hasn't had time to write up either their triumph or her usual President's message. I am sure we will get a full report on the show at the spring meeting.

Over the winter I got a mailing to announce the publication of Ericas of South Africa by Dolf Schumann and Gerhard Kirsten from Fernwood Press of the Republic of South Africa. This rather pricey book is not in my budget at present, but I would love to read a review of it if any member purchases a copy. The pictures in the brochure are enticing and glorious.

Heather Notes

Editor

Susan Fischler
180 Everett Pl.
Englewood, NJ 07631
201-567-6431

Contributors for this Issue

- Will Clarke.....28 Longview Rd.
N. Falmouth, MA
02556
- Charlie Gardiner.....19850 Marchmont Rd.
Shaker Heights, OH
44122
- Greta Waterman...6 Rolland Kimball Rd
Freeport, ME 04032
- Walter Wornick.....P. O. Box 101
Alstead, NH
03602

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- Summer June 15
- Fall Sept. 15
- Winter Dec. 15
- Spring March 15

Correspondence from Afar

Jan. 28, 1992

E. darleyensis

Furzey, Silberschmeltz, Sherwood's Early Red, Erica x Darleyensis 'Mediterranean Pink' are all in bloom. The real costar is my Erica tetralix 'Mollis Pink' that has had blooms all 365 days last year!! An incredible plant!! (The Erica 'Mollis White' only bloomed twice. Why?) My primulas kept blooming until the January deep freeze. See you in May (at least!).

Kathy Udall
Orleans, MA

Just a slight hello note. Wanted to say that NEHS puts out a colorful, attractive and informative newsletter. We are pleased to receive it.

Our water table is up high enough that we are assured water for the garden. Jim has been concerned up until now.

So many winter heathers are in bloom. The heathers are really looking good and make lovely companions for all the spring blooms. We even have about 40 Monarch butterflies enjoying the area—usually we only have a handful. Hope Mother Nature doesn't spring any surprises on us.

Bev Thompson
Manchester, CA

February 10, 1992

My heather, too, has had little snow to blanket it this winter and my spare time has been spent repositioning pine boughs cast off by the wind. Spring will soon let me know if my efforts have paid off.

Lisa Golymbieski
Southbury, CT

Another open winter! It will be interesting to see how herbaceous, semi-hardies and sub-shrubs (including heathers) survived exposure to the full force of sun and wind.

Keep up the great work.

Paul E. Rogers
Charlton, MA

Congrats on another good issue of Heather Notes.

A humble request: Please put a date somewhere easily seen—Spring 1992 or Jan.-Mar, 1992 or even Vol. 1, #4, 1992, anything—so I can find it more easily at a later date. "Inside" is quite helpful.

Channy Brokaw
VT

Garden Fund Increases

by Walter Wornick

Our garden fund continues to grow and we thank the following members for their contributions: Joyce Descloux, Jeannine Greene, Starr Roxanne Hiltz and Murray Turoff. Recently, this fund was used to purchase Reemay to protect the beds at Wolf's Neck Farm of the University of Southern Maine. We also continue to purchase replacement plants and supplies for our heather garden at Herritage Plantation and we will use it to buy the plants for our new project at the Berkshire Garden Center this spring.

Membership News

by Walter Wornick

We have had a very good renewal response and thank all those people who renewed for more than one year since that method saves me time and effort. The cheery notes sent along with renewal checks brightened many a winter's day. "Nice people, Nice organization. Best wishes to all."—Orlan Gaeddert, Canaan, NY; "That was a very nice write-up about our meeting at Sylvan-hope we can do it again."—Andy Wheeler, Westport Point, MA; "What great group! Thanks—I've renewed for three years."—Jill Anderson, Barnard, VT; "Enclosed are dues for two 'heather lovers'. The first is a renewal and the second is for a new member"—Paul Rogers, Charlton, MA. Then too, there was also a member who sent in her AARP Election Poll. I wonder what the AARP is doing with our dues check?

Perceptions of Heather in the Early 1900's

by Charlie Gardiner

Every quarter when the current **Heather Notes** arrives, I feel a twinge of conscience. Some months ago, in a weak moment, I promised a review of an old book about heather. I could probably make up some far-fetched tale with logical and illogical reasons for the delay, but I'm a better procrastinator than fiction writer.

The Heather in Lore, Lyric and Lay by Alexander Wallace, editor of The Florist's Exchange, New York was published in 1903 by A. T. LaMare Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd., New York. This book was written by a homesick highlander. Heather signified to him all that was great and glorious about his early years. After pointing out the derivation of "heather" from the growing of heath, he justifies his homesickness with a quotation from a Dr. Prior, "When the north of Europe was a forest, open land was naturally preferred for the site of dwellings; the heath was the only open land, and thus acquired a name that has been used to designate a field or homestead."

"It is the association of the Heather with the word 'home' that makes Prior's explanation so agreeable to the Scottish heart.To many a mountain child, the purple hillside is the only flower garden he knows; but what a garden! Reaching from

horizon to horizon, it is the best of bedding plants, requiring no care or expenditure; the greener after the worst of storms; when August's sun blisters most fiercely, only more purple and luxuriant; the home of all that is purifying in heart and taste,"

After twenty some pages of conjecture the author arrives at no real conclusion as to whether naturalized heather in North America is native or transported by other homesick Scots. He does advise that Scottish people often used heather as a bed to sleep on and suggests that some naturalized heather resulted from seed in heather thrown out from ships. "I want my Serta" comes to mind.

A similar pseudo-scientific discussion is conducted regarding the possibility of micorhizal symbiosis being necessary for the heather to grow. Quoting two learned gentlemen, one a reverend and the other a professor who ran a commercial nursery, Mr. Wallace lets us reach our own conclusion.

Mr. Wallace devoted a bit of research to the commercial uses of heather which included: thatch for roofs, beds, besoms and scrubbing brushes and as a forage plant. Many medicinal virtues are claimed, such as:

1) Resolving the malignity of tumors

- 2) Giveth much ease to the paines within the body
- 3) Expelleth the worms therein also
- 4) Good against the stings and bitings of serpents and other venomous creatures
- 5) Doth absolutely breake the stone and drive it forth
- 6) Easeth the chollicke
- 7) The said water of the juyce of the herbe dropped into the eyes helpeth the weaknesse of sight
- 8) Oyle made with the flowers of Heath used against the Wolfe in the face or any other foule or fretting and eating canker spreading over the whole face
- 9) The same doth ^s disolve tumours.

After reading this, do you think that each heather grower should register with the F. D. A.?

In his book, Mr. Wallace devotes 15 pages to Heather Ale. Perhaps I will write another article on this chapter

Yes
1903?
March 1885
1820

no
no

Spring Meeting

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77 Middle St.
Northampton, MA 01073
Wide variety of plants - productive,
edible, underutilized.

Berkshire Garden Center
(413) 298-3926
Rt. 102/PO Box 826
Stockbridge, MA 01262

Non-profit botanic garden. Site of
the Spring '91 NEHS meeting and
soon to be home of a new heather
display garden.

Naumkeag
413-298-3239
Prospect Hill Rd./PO Box 792
Stockbridge, MA 02162

Mansion open to the public.
Extensive gardens designed by
Fletcher Steel.

Smith College's Garden Heritage

On February 6, 1992, *The New York Times* published an article about the long involvement of Smith College with horticultural matters. Since the NEHS spring meeting will be held there, the article is being reproduced here to give you more information about our host sight.

Smith College's Shows Celebrate a Green World

By PAULA DEITZ

IN NORTHAMPTON, Mass. 1890, Smith College engaged the landscape architecture firm of Frederick Law Olmsted to lay out its campus as an ornamental botanic garden and arboretum. Five years later, plans were completed for greenhouses in the Gothic Revival style.

The greenhouses now number 12. There is a serpentine pond as in an 18th-century landscape garden, and with its lofty trees, the Victorian campus still reflects Olmsted's pastoral esthetic while its plant groupings serve scientific purposes.

This commitment to horticulture and design is now being celebrated by three exhibitions at the college. The shows, a demonstration of the prominence of women in landscape architecture, are being held in conjunction with "Design and Nature: A Smith College Symposium on Landscape Architecture" on Feb. 29.

"We ought to keep this part of the world green no matter what happens elsewhere," one Smith president is quoted as saying in one of the shows.

"Landscapes and Gardens Designed by Smith College Alumnae," at Hillyer Fine Arts Center until Feb. 29, features alumnae now making careers as landscape architects, garden designers or environmental planners.

"Parks and Pleasure Grounds," a selection of rare books, is at the Neilson Library until March 13, and "The Smith College Campus: 'Not Only to Have a Garden, but to Be a Garden,'" an archival display with period photographs and campus plans, will be on

view at the library through Aug. 7.

The exhibition of alumnae projects can be seen as a microcosm of what is happening nationally, both in terms of landscape design and of women's participation in the profession. The projects are arranged chronologically by class year, from 1930 to 1987.

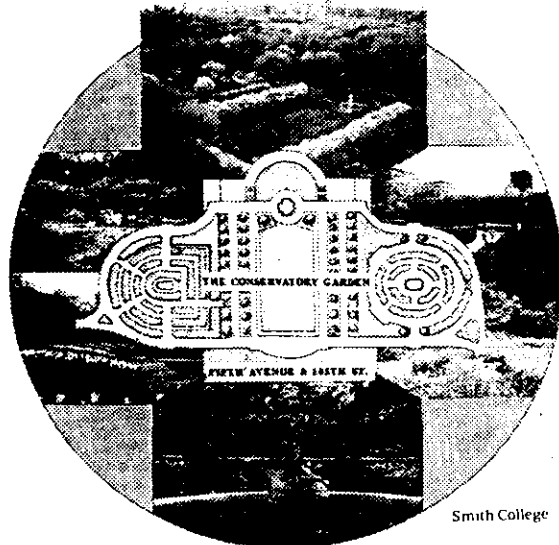
Divided like the parterres of a formal garden, an exhibit by Lynden B. Miller, a public-garden designer in Manhattan, describes with plans, photographs and planting schemes five gardens in New York City that she is "painting with plants." For example, columnar yews punctuating her new borders for Bryant Park in Manhattan reflect the Beaux-Arts architecture of the New York Public Library, which adjoins the park.

At the Belle Haven Yacht Club in Greenwich, Conn., Susan Cohen, who practices there, transformed barren rocky shores with a sweeping perennial border.

A landscape architect from Vancouver, British Columbia, Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, collaborates closely with architects. In Washington, she created hanging gardens with Hawthorn trees over cascading roses for the stepped terraces of the Canadian Chancery.

Melissa Marshall, an environmental planner in Pittsburgh, has designed a new tropical conservatory for that city.

In the rare book exhibit are 17th-century engravings of gardens adjoining Oxford's colleges, and a volume by Louis XIV's gardener donated to Smith by Beatrix Farrand, the only woman among the founders of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 1899.



Smith College

An exhibition of work by landscape architects who graduated from Smith College includes Lynden B. Miller's 1960 design for the Conservatory Garden in Central Park.

Help Wanted

by Greta Waterman

April 25, 1992 has been chosen as the day volunteers and the Bowdoin College staff will prune two large heather beds. The planting at Bowdoin is substantial and represents about 25 cultivars of *Calluna vulgaris* and 10 of *Ericas*. It is extremely important to help maintain these beds so that the public can continue to enjoy the beauty of heathers and heaths.

If you are interested in helping, you should contact Greta Waterman at 207-865-0407. There will also be another group pruning heathers at Wolf Neck Farm in Freeport in late April. Greta will have information about that activity also.

Book Service

The NEHS book service still has copies available of Dorothy Metheny's *Hardy Heather Species*, 1991, for \$15.00 and the *Proudly's Heathers in Color*, 1989, for \$16.00. Add \$2.00 per book for postage and mail your order to Walter Wornick. If you are interested in the 1990 Underhill book, *Heaths and Heathers* or the new book by David Carr, *Heathers and Conifer*, at reduced prices let Walter know too. We can get them if at least six people want each title.

Winter Meeting Held At Wellesley College

by Greta Waterman

Fifteen hardy souls gathered at the snow-covered Wellesley College campus on February 8, 1992 for the winter meeting of the NEHS. Walter Wornick, our Treasurer/Secretary, reported that we have 220 members and a bank balance of \$2,920. Will Clarke, Vice-President, reported on plans for upcoming meetings: May 2, 1992 at Smith College and a two day annual meeting to be held in mid-September, probably in southern New Hampshire.

We were advised of two horticultural happenings, the Boston Flower show which begins on March 14 and the Tower Hill Plant Sale outside Worcester, MA on May 30, where we will promote heather from the Rock Spray Nursery booth. We will provide literature on both NEHA and NAHS.

Although Shirley Redington was unable to attend the meeting, she relayed the information that the beds at the Berkshire Botanical Garden are prepared and ready for planting this spring. Kate Herrick, President reported that Susan Fischer, our *Heather Notes* Editor, would like more material for the publication. Greta Waterman asked for the approval of monies from the Garden Fund to replace some heathers in the large planting in front of the art museum at Bowdoin

College.

Following the business segment and lunch was a discussion of heather garden design. Molly Evans and Kate brought plans of heather beds and Kate showed slides of heathers being used in different garden sites. Mac and Edna MacKinon showed slides of heathers growing in England and Vancouver and brought along some new varieties of *Calluna vulgaris*.

Wellesley College then provided us with a guided tour of its many greenhouses.

Recall

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by asserting that "No matter how carefully you plan, I guarantee that when you're done, you'll either have plants left over or you'll need to buy more." Despite sounding like something Yogi Berra could have said, this is a valid observation. Paper plans are useful but most gardens are fine tuned at planting time by moving the plants around to see how they look. That's when you find out how many plants you really need and, as Mac reiterated in Wellesley, "it's nice to have a lot of plants on hand."

Al Doggart thinks heather gardens have too much variety; that we should be planting larger drifts of a single cultivar. I suspect he's right but it takes a lot of discipline to plant a lot of plants without being a plant collector.

Sources for Heath and Heather Plants

by Walter Wornick

People frequently ask for sources of heather and heath. While plants are usually offered for sale at our meetings, I have compiled a list of members who have plants for sale and coded each with "W" for wholesale, "L" for landscapers, "R" for retail at the nursery and "M" for mailorder. Mention that you are an NEHS member when contacting them.

Cady's Falls Nursery (Don and Lela Avery) RD 3 - Box 2100, Morrisville, VT 802-888-5559—(R) general nursery stock including some heathers. Catalogue available to members in that area.

Provstar Nursery (Marge and George Walsh) RFD 2, Box 250, Litchfield, ME 04350 207-724-3369—(R,M,L) general nursery including heaths and heathers. Catalogue available.

Heather Acres (Alice and Bob Knight) 62 Elma-Monte Rd., Elma, WA 98541 206-482-3258—(W,R,M,L) largest supplier of heather and heaths on the west coast. Some succulents also. List available.

The Heather Garden (Greta Waterman) 6 Roland Kimball Rd., Freeport, ME 04032 207-865-3618—(R,M,L) list available.

Susan Kierstead, 58 Seaverns Br., Amherst, NH 03031 603-424-2300—(M,R) a home nursery which

has expanded greatly since NEHS had a meeting there a few years ago. Over 1,000 perennials including heathers. There is a main list of plants and a separate list for heathers.

Environmentals (Jim Cross) Box 730, Cutchogue, L. I., NY 11935—(W,L)

Rock Spray Nursery (Kate Herrick and Betsy Erickson) P. O. Box 693, Depot Rd., Truro, MA 02666 508-349-6769—(W, L, R, M) This is the largest grower of heaths and heathers on the east coast. Their retail nursery includes general stock, too. Catalogue available.

Sylvan Nursery, 1028 Horseneck Rd., Westport, MA 02790—(W, L, R) general nursery stock and extensive heaths and heather.

Waquoit Heather Nursery (George and Edna MacKinnon) Box 3214 Carriage Shop Rd., Waquoit, MA 02536 508-548-6979—(W, L, R, M) extensive heaths and heathers and some general nursery stock. They specialize in many new, imported varieties. List available.

If any other members are marketing heaths and heathers, please let me know so that I can add your name to our list. We have had requests for sources in the western part of Canada.

Winter Meeting Recall

by Will Clarke

The "theme" of the winter meeting was heather garden design. As always there was lots of informal discussion and I thought I'd repeat some of what I heard. All quotes are from my memory and if you feel you've been misrepresented—by all means send in a correction!

It was gratifying that some members took my remarks on winter gardens seriously enough to disagree. Edna MacKinnon pointed out, quite rightly, that I had sold the green foliated Callunas short, in terms of winter interest. She remarked "He obviously hasn't seen my heathers" and noted that foliage color on a single plant can range from bright green to almost black, depending on the exposure and orientation. Al Daggart thought flower color shouldn't be given much consideration when designing heather gardens since the plants are usually in bloom for only a few weeks of the year.

If you do work with flower color you might try Molly Evans' method. She mounted a sketch of a proposed new bed on corrugated cardboard and pinned pieces of colored paper on to represent the bloom colors. This approach makes it easy to experiment with different combinations.

One of the practical challenges of garden design is determining the number of plants to buy. Mack MacKinnon brought the house down,

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