



Heather Notes

Volume 2

Number 3/4

Fall/Winter

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Northeast Heather Society

1992

1992 Annual Meeting Held In NY

by Shirley Redington and Wil Clarke

In Brief

Winter Meeting- Feb. 20, 1993

Membership dues due Jan. 1

Suggest a future meeting site

NEHS members now equal 242

Wanted: "Cutting Exchange" snips

Heather Notes needs contributors-

Get your name in print

At the annual meeting of the NEHS held on September 19 and 20, 1992 at the Cutler Botanic Garden, Binghamton, NY, the membership unanimously voted in the slate of officers presented by the Board of Directors: Will Clarke, president; Judy Anamahian, vice-president and Walter Wornick, secretary-treasurer. Board members serving for the new term are Kate Herrick as past-president, George Mackinnon, Lee Nelson, Harry Bowen and Susan Fischler as the editor of **HeatherNotes**.

it is laid out and planted primarily as a teaching facility for the Broome County Master Gardener Volunteers and for the public, the design is artistic and beautiful. It is also a popular setting for wedding parties and photographers.

Following our tour of Cutler the group caravanned to downtown Binghamton to see the garden of Dr. John Westcott, designed and installed, more than thirty years ago, by Walter Kolaga. Featuring many heaths and heathers, some dwarf Rhododendrons and ground cover plants, the garden is a demonstration of what can be done in a relatively small space and a tribute to skilled maintenance by the present owner. Dr. Westcott has also been very successful propagating heathers in small cold frames and had driveway full of nice looking plants in pots to show for it.

Pausing only briefly at the motel, the group moved on to Lee Nelson's home for a social hour. Lee has

continued on page 6, column 2

Inside

Propagating.....	pg. 3
Late Fall Bloom.....	pg. 4
Winter, 1992.....	pg. 5
Winter Meeting.....	pg. 5
Book Corner.....	pg. 6
Winter Survey.....	pg. 7

Harry Bowen reported that the Osterville Garden's heather planting project has been going very well with the enthusiastic cooperation of the Cape Cod Horticultural Society. Shirley Redington showed samples of the labels now installed in the heather planting at the Berkshire Botanical Garden in Stockbridge, MA.

Harry presented a slide talk on the culture of heaths and heathers before Lee Nelson took us on a guided tour of the garden. Though

From Your Editor

My good friend Walter called the other night to find out what had happened to **Heather Notes**. He was somewhat concerned that the fall edition had not appeared and that the membership would not have enough notice to plan for attending the winter meeting. I told him that I had only agreed to edit a newsletter, not to write it! Therefore, **Heather Notes** can only appear when enough material has been submitted to me to make publication of an issue viable.

In past messages, I have sought contributions from all members of our organization but as you can see from the contributors section in every issue, the newsletter is being produced through the efforts of just a small fraction of our membership. Here are some suggestions to increase our column inches. Instead of sending your comments about heathers, **Heather Notes**, gardening and the weather to Walter, send them to me to be included in the newsletter. Watch for media references to heather and send me a clipping or a brief report. Share your heather successes and failures so that other members can benefit from them. Don't be intimidated by material submission dates. I'm not!

From Your President

You may remember Admiral Stockdale's opening line at the Vice Presidential candidate's debate: "Who am I and what am I doing here?" I know just how he felt. I have no vast knowledge of heathers nor a great deal of organizational experience and I have a tough act to follow. I am, however, committed to the NEHS and its goals and I have a great board of directors to assist me. So, if you'll forgive me for not knowing hundreds of cultivars and permit me some latitude in matters parliamentary, perhaps I'll muddle through.

My agenda for the first hundred days (or for however long it takes) is to carry out our purpose as stated in the bylaws: "to foster interest in growing heathers in gardens in eastern North America." And, as I see it, we have three primary means of pursuing this objective- meetings, display gardens and **Heather Notes**.

I think the best thing we can do to encourage meeting attendance is to set dates and locations well in advance, to have interesting programs and to let people know that there are almost always some outstanding homemade deserts served. I'm thrilled that Judith Anmahian is our Vice President and she has already done all of the leg work for the winter meeting in Worcester. The annual meeting is planned for Sept. 11-12, 1993, at Heritage Plantation on Cape Cod where we have been offered free admission and use of a meeting room. This location will also permit us to view the new plantings in Osterville.

Seeing heather growing has to be the best way to foster interest in our genera and

continued on page 3, column 1

Heather Notes

Editor

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

Contributors for this Issue

Judy Anmahian.....23 Tispaquin St.
Middleboro, MA
02346

Will Clarke.....28 Longview Rd.
N. Falmouth, MA
02556

Shirley Redington..1169 Mohawk Rd.
Scherbrooke, NY
12309

Walter Wornick.....P. O. Box 101
Alstead, NH
03602

Starr R. Hiltz..19 Meadow Brook Rd
Randolph, N.J.
07869

Heather Notes is published quarterly. Submit all manuscripts to the editor by the deadlines which are as follows:

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

Presidents Message

continued from page 2

we have been developing a number of outstanding gardens. I'd like us to continue our commitments to maintaining these gardens through plant replacements, pruning sessions and other care. I'd also like to see an up to date list of NEHS display gardens and their locations.

When you consider that meeting attendance is in the neighborhood of 10%, it becomes clear that this newsletter is the principal benefit our members receive and our primary means of communicating with one another. Irregular publication is a direct result of lack of submitted material. Begging for articles is very tiresome and, unfortunately, not very effective. Maybe we should think of **Heather Notes** as a forum. Any question or observation of yours is bound to interest other members as well. Just jot it down and send it to our editor. Maybe we could have an obituary column for deceased cultivars. We might begin to see a hardiness pattern especially after a hard winter. All ideas are welcome. As an incentive, I propose that we offer a free plant from our plant sales for each submission of 100 words or more. Any takers?

Membership Info

Please check your mailing label for your membership expiration date. If 92 appears, your NEHS dues should be paid for 1993. Our yearly dues are \$5 and you may renew your membership for more than one year if you desire. As the Secretary/Treasurer, Walter Wornick is responsible for dues collection. His address is located in the list of contributors on page two.

Propagating - But Not By The Book

by Will Clarke

The day following the 1991 Fall Meeting at Sylvans I was full of enthusiasm to propagate some heathers. The procedure was clear in my mind: take the cuttings, dip them in rooting powder, stick them in a mixture of coarse sand and perlite and drench them with fungicide. I had the plant stock. All I lacked was the rooting powder, the coarse sand, the perlite and the fungicide. But I went for it anyway.

A quick tour of the garden yielded cuttings of: C. v. 'Robert Chapman', C. v. 'White Knight', C. v. 'Spring Torch'; E. cinerea 'C. D. Eason', and E. tetralix 'George Frazer'. I also cut some Spanish Lavender and Artemesia vallicola. My daughter, Chelsea, then seven years old, took an interest and asked to try some cuttings too. I pointed out some likely candidates, then averted my eyes while she took snips of C. v. 'Tib', E. carnea 'Winter Beauty', green and gray Santolinas, Artemesia 'Powis Castle' and English lavender.

We had some fine textured soilless potting mix and I used my influence to get some beach sand from the sand box, which we mixed in (about a 3 to 1 ratio). We got the mix good and wet, filled some trays, stuck our cuttings and put the covers on weighted with rocks). I put the trays in a spot that, prior to hurricane Bob, had been shady but was now sunnier than I had hoped. Quite a lot of water condensed inside the covers of the trays but on most days I remembered to lift and drain them.

The trays we used may warrant a short description. They are from Gardener's Supply and called "APS". They consist of a foam plastic tray with individual bottomless cells (40 each, 1"x 1" or 24 each 1.75"x 1.75",

depending on the model), a clear plastic cover, and a self-watering base. The design consists of a reservoir, a platform and a piece of capillary matting to transport the water from the reservoir to the bottom of the cells. The reservoir only needs filling occasionally and the cells are evenly watered. Since I had had good luck starting seeds with this system I wanted to try it for cuttings.

In early December the weather turned cold and I brought the trays into my basement, which stays between 40 and 50 degrees F. in winter and put them under lights. Even lifting the covers once or twice a day didn't prevent algae from growing on the surface of the planting mix so I finally took them off. After a few days the cuttings had a dull look to them so I replaced the covers but kept them propped up a little.

By late January, most of the cuttings were showing new growth. The lavenders and Santolinas were the first to root and all the heaths and heathers seemed to come along at about the same time. The 'Powis Castle' damped off but I'm especially happy that the other Artemesia - vallicola - rooted easily. Norman Singer had given me this plant when we visited his garden. It has unusual frothy foliage and, while it may be common in rock garden circles, I hadn't seen it before. I potted the cuttings in May and they look good at age one despite being neglected over the summer.

I'm not proud of taking such a slipshod approach and maybe I should sign this "Otto B. Schot" but if I had waited till I had time and materials to do it right, I'd be many plants poorer and still waiting. The point is if I can propagate heathers, (and contribute to the newsletter and serve as an officer) you can too.

Confused Callunas? In Search of Late Fall Bloomers

by Starr Roxanne Hiltz

I hope to share some results with you from time to time from one of "your" heather gardens, which happens to be located in our yard. How did this happen? A few years ago, we bought a few heaths and heathers and joined the Northeast Heather Society. Then Joyce Descloux, who lives up the hill, called and asked if we would host part of the annual meeting in the summer of 1991. We had a wonderful time meeting many of you and buying heather ...and acquiring heather! First the Mackinnons brought us about 30 pots as a house present. Then we bought about 30 more mid to large size pots at the plant sale the first day. Sixty pots would have made a nice little garden. But then, because we donated the barbecue/luncheon, Kate Herrick insisted that we keep all of the plants that were left over from the plant sale: about 60 more!

With 120 heaths and heathers to find homes for, we were plunged into major construction. First we ordered more truckloads of sand and topsoil, and bales of peat moss and bags of pine chips. We went hunting at local construction sights for more rocks and managed to get them home without breaking an axle on the van. Then Murray Turoff, my husband and co-enthusiast, began about three weeks of digging and lugging. When he was through, we had a heather garden prepared about 15 feet by 25 feet in size, with a winding path through the length and artificial "berms" for the plants to wander over. As he finished each part, I began the planting. This year, we expanded by adding a half moon at one end and buying another

50 plants or so. We hope to be able to show you the slides sometime of the heather garden in preparation and then in bloom.

For those of you who were not here, the garden is located on the edge of a small lake in a "mountain" valley on the cold edge of zone six in northwest New Jersey. The "mountain" is in quotes because they are really just hills, but folks who come from the coastal plains call them mountains. So did George Washington, who rode to the top of the hill behind the lake to look for British troops marching on him from New York 30 miles away, and called it "Mount Freedom." One of my objectives has been to find plants that will bloom in the late fall, which I define as October and November. By the beginning of October, we are having light frosts. By the beginning of December, winter closes in, with the ground and lake freezing solid and the snow flying. It's that period when the days are warm and sunny and I am outside a lot, but most of the annuals and perennials have succumbed to frost or exhaustion, that has been the target of my plant searches and notes this year.

Forget that callunas are supposed to bloom then, according to their tags and the books. For instance, C. v. 'Fanale' and 'Elegantissima Walter Ingwersen' bloomed in August and were all done by the end of September. Actually, by the end of September, the best looking C. v. in the garden was 'County Wicklow'>

Here it is All Hallow's Eve and I have

just taken notes on what I have been observing for the last month in terms of "what blooms now?" Erica tetralix 'Mollis' and 'Alba Mollis' have nice second blooms as does E. stuarti 'Irish Lemon.' Some of the Ericas are beginning to bloom including 'March Seedling', 'Silberschmelze' and 'Pirbright Rose'.

The champions, however, are two callunas, which are also blooming way before they are supposed to. Second prize for best end of October bloom goes to a new calluna I bought at Rock Spray called 'Saint Nick'. The tag has information similar to that in Underhill's Heaths and Heathers book: "grows 4 inches high, spreads to 18, lilac pink buds (sparse) Dec-Jan." That does not sound very promising, so I only bought one. Actually, it is about 8 inches high in bloom, it started at the beginning of October and is in full bloom at the end of October, is NOT sparse and the color edges towards magenta, not a washed-out lilac-pink at all. I want more!

AND THE WINNER IS...C. v. 'Jan', purchased at Waquoit in August. Underhill says it is mauve and blooms in Dec-Jan. Actually, it is a nice clear purplish color, started blooming in mid-September and has been in full bloom for the last few weeks. Right now it is about a foot tall, but Underhill says it will get to 22 inches, a bit large for my taste and garden. I'll trim it down in the spring, buy a few more if I can find them and let you know how this "Champion of October bloom" performs in subsequent years.

The Book Corner

Walter Wornick has the following heather books available for purchase by NEHS members. Individual prices are noted below and the shipping costs are \$2 for the first book and \$1.50 for each additional volume. If you want to purchase any, make your check payable to the NEHS and send it to Walter, P.O. Box 101, Alstead, NH 03602.

David & Anne Small, Handy Guide to Heathers, soft cover, spiral bound, 115 pgs., 1992- this is really an up-date of the Yates book and is sponsored by the British Heather Society- \$9

Dorothy Metheny, Hardy Heather Species, soft cover, 186 pgs., 1991- published by the North American Heather Society- \$15

The rest of the books are used. They have become collectors items and are becoming difficult to obtain.

D. F. Maxwell & P. S. Patrick, The English Heather Garden, 184 pgs., 1966, some color plates- \$18
Book Club edition, no color- \$16

David McClintock, A Guide to the Naming of Plants (with special reference to heathers), soft cover, 1969, 39 pgs- \$5

D. F. Maxwell, The Low Road, 1927, 125 pgs., rare- \$22

John F, Letts, Introducing Hardy Heaths & The Heather Garden,

1966, 128 pgs., \$16

A. T. Johnson, Hardy Heaths and Some of Their Nearer Allies, 1928 edition, 116 pgs., \$15
1956 edition, 127 pgs., \$14
Garden Club Edition, 127 pgs., \$13

Brian & Valerie Proudley, Heathers In Color, 1974 edition- \$12
1985 edition- \$14
1989 edition- \$15

Fred J. Chapple, The Heather Garden, 1952 edition, 180 pgs.- \$16
1960 edition, 160 pgs.- \$18
1964 edition, 190 pgs.- \$20

Terry L. Underhill, Heaths and Heather, 1971, 256 pgs.- \$20
Garden Club edition, 256 pgs.- \$18

Winter of '92

continued from page 5, column 2

Callunas that had spread to my lawn did not seem to be effected at all by either the winter or my lawn mower. If it was just the winter cold that caused the loss of my heathers, why did my collection of rhododendrons, in proximity and many of which were young plants, survive?

I submit that there are many factors that may cause the loss of plants and lack of snow cover and varied winter temperatures may just be part of it. Before I circle the wagons, retrench and cover my plants with an unnatural substance, I will try to see what I can do to provide a happier environment for my heathers so more of them can come through the storms of life.

Replant with daylilies? Never.....

Fall Meeting Report

continued from page 1, column 3

managed to combine many kinds of gardens - rock garden, dwarf conifers, flowering perennials, shade plants, vegetables, and of course, heathers - with out cluttering her long narrow property.

Following dinner at the Four Seasons restaurant, Lee presented a slide show of British gardens to very favorable reviews.

On Sunday at Cornell Plantations the membership saw herb gardening on a large, and very impressive, scale. Also on the agenda was a smaller garden highlighted by a Turkish Filbert planted by our own

Dick Munson.

The meeting concluded with a visit to the garden of Elizabeth Sheldon, a well-known writer and gardener. Ms. Sheldon who used to operate a perennial nursery at her home, has a long border full of unusual and exceptional plants. At one end of the border heathers are used effectively as a transition from herbaceous sun lovers to a shade garden with a higher proportion of woody plants. She also has developed a new, enclosed, "hot garden" which seemed to be at least ten degrees above the ambient temperature.

Winter Protection Survey

This is the first of what could be a regular feature in **Heather Notes**. It's a thinly disguised attempt to solicit contributions from the membership using questionnaires. It seemed timely to begin with the issue of winter protection. Don't feel limited by the questions! The more you report, the more we can share. Please return your form to Will Clarke, 28 Longview Rd. , N. Falmouth, MA 02556. Feel free to write your responses longhand if you don't want to rip your newsletter apart.

Do you cover any or all of your heathers?

If you do, what materials have you used?

What were your results?

When do you apply winter cover?

When do you remove cover?

What USDA hardiness zone are you in?

Do you generally have snow cover?

Do you typically have winter damage?

Have you ever used anti-dessicant sprays on heathers?

If you used the anti-dessicant, were you pleased with the results?

Which of your plants seem most susceptible to winter damage?

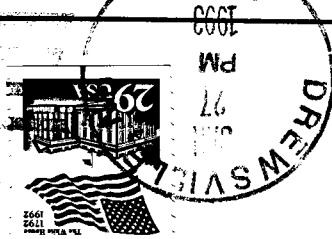
Which of your plants seem most resistant to winter damage?

Additional comments

EXPIRES: 12/31/94
 ELINOR COHEN
 316 WOODLAND HILLS RD
 WHITE PLAINS NY 10603

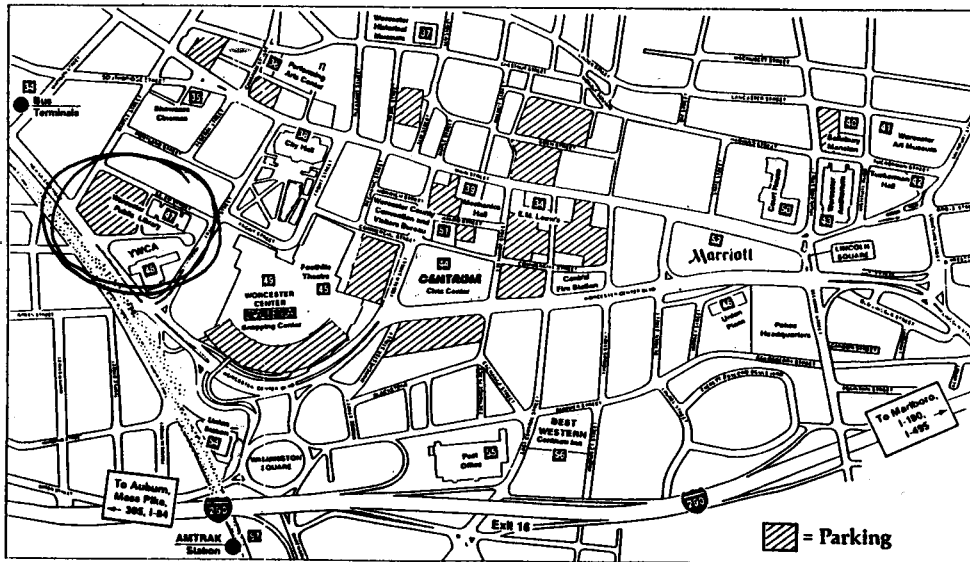


FIRST-CLASS MAIL



Northeast Heather Society
 P. O. Box 101
 Aistead, NH 03602

Saturday, February 20th, Saxe Room, 2nd Floor



DIRECTIONS TO THE WORCESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY - SALEM SQUARE

Exit 16, I-290. East bound, exit 16, at end of off ramp turn left at lights onto East Central Street. West bound, exit 16, bear right at end of off ramp onto East Central Street. Take 2nd left onto Worcester Center Blvd. At the Worcester Center Galleria and the Centrum, turn left at lights. Continue through intersection at Franklin Street. At end of brick wall, turn right onto YWCA Hay. Metered parking is in lot on your left and adjacent to the Library.