



# Heather Notes

Volume 3

Number 1

Spring

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Northeast Heather Society

1993

## In Brief

Spring Meeting- May 1, 1993

Membership dues past due

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## Winter Protection Survey Results Revealed

by Will Clarke

Many thanks to all the members who responded to the questionnaire printed in the winter issue of *Heather Notes*. It was wonderful hearing from so many heather enthusiasts. Responses were still arriving at press time and I plan to update this report in the fall. So if you haven't responded, but would like to, by all means do! Your efforts won't be wasted.

It's clear that heathers are susceptible to winter damage, especially in the colder zones and that covering the plants is effective in reducing such damage. Our members find *Erica carnea* to be exceptionally winter hardy but exposure, age, and height appear to be more important factors than cultivar selection. I've summarized the results, question by question, and given statistics where possible.

*Do you cover any, or all, your heathers?*  
All respondents cover at least some of their plants (presumably members who don't cover simply didn't have much to say on the subject). Only five of 15 routinely cover all their heathers, the remainder cover their new plantings and/or unusually exposed plants and less hardy varieties. R. L. Morgan of Goode,

VA covers new heather beds with boughs, in spring, presumably to shade and protect against desiccation.

*What materials have you used?*

Evergreen boughs, often from discarded Christmas trees, were by far the most popular material used (13 of 15). Four members augmented the boughs with pine needles - this combination appears to be the "Cadillac" of winter protection - and two members used needles and/or leaves alone. Shirley Redington anchors oak leaves with "twigs" but notes that the pine needles stay put on their own. Four people have experimented with Reemay™, a non-woven polyester fabric, and were encouraged by the results.

*What were your results?*

Invariably respondents felt covering was worthwhile, most noting that winter damage, when it did occur, was primarily on heathers that lost their cover to wind or were tall enough to protrude above the cover.

*When do you apply winter cover?*

*continued on page 6, column 1*

## Inside

Letters.....pg. 3

Copeland Remembered.....pg. 4

NEHS Honors.....pg. 5

Spreading the Word.....pg. 5

Meeting News X 3.....pg. 7

## From Your Editor

Spring is here and no one has mentioned pruning! I paid my first visit of the year to my Cape Cod home over Easter weekend and one of the chores I had planned on was pruning the heather collection. Surprisingly, the bushes were in good shape considering that they had missed last year's trim. The weather was not at all cooperative and yet I kept at the task until cold and rain drove me indoors.

I left the oldest plants for my next trip since they take the longest to trim. I don't like the sheared effect so I have developed my own system and I finally have the maneuvers down pat. First, I approach each plant from the rear and remove any dead material. Next, I cut back last year's flowering stems and shorten any long, straggling branches. Then and repeat the whole procedure from the front of the plant and give it a final inspection.

It works for me!

## From Your President

Spring is here, time to assess winters damage and execute winters plans. There's far too much to do and to enjoy. We're lucky though, as heather gardeners, that the action isn't all concentrated in a few months. Many of our plants look their absolute best in winter, like C. v. 'Robert Chapman', a single plant of which gives me great pleasure all season.

Of course enjoying my garden requires a lot of selective vision. In the tradition of cobbler's children going barefoot, the gardens suffer from neglect. Part collection, part trial beds, part nursery and all "in progress", they exist, as gardens, mostly in my mind's eye.

I make this confession in hopes of dispelling concerns about the "Plant Police". What are the Plant Police? They're the ones that tell us what, where and how to plant. Who would presume to do such a thing? Sometimes it's the "Authorities". In the Dec. 1992 issue of *Horticulture*, none other than Christopher Lloyd describes a friend's garden: "When I first knew the borders, there were masses of low-growing heathers, which grow only too well in our climate. (Americans don't know their good fortune in finding them difficult.) Every suburban British garden has to have it's bed of heathers - long interest, beautiful color, ground cover etc. But the plants are formless and lack presence. Lovely wild on the moors, they should stay there." I don't think we should be especially bothered by this sort of thing. Strong opinions make for interesting reading, and anyway, consider the source - Mr. Lloyd prunes his Yews in the shape of tea pots! At most, I would consider his remarks an argument for strong bed shapes and vertical companion plants in heather gardens. I'm certainly not about to, as Walter put it last issue, "re-plant with daylilies" just because one of the worlds leading gardeners is bored

*continued on page 3, column 1*

## Heather Notes

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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 15

## President's Message

*continued from page 2, column 1*

with heathers.

Sometimes, however, to paraphrase Pogo, the Plant Police is us. One member, who answered the questionnaire on winter protection, was almost apologetic for not keeping careful records about his heaths and heathers. I suppose the questions did give the impression that that sort of thing is expected. Orlan Gaeddert commented that: "Prior to '92 I had only a few heathers. They seemed like idiot proof, no hassle plants. Then I expanded - and joined the heather society and read books. Now it all seems so complicated. Well, my old heathers still look magnificent on a strict diet of benign neglect."

Time out! What we all want, I think, is to get more enjoyment out of our gardens.

We want to be encouraging, not intimidating, each other. The hope is to share our experiences, and questions, and learn from each other, taking to heart what works for each of us.

To further interaction between members, we have bundled the current membership list with this issue. If any corrections are needed, please notify Walter Wornick when you send him your dues check. If, unlike me, you wouldn't mind other members visiting your garden (by appointment only) please let us know, and we'll include that information in future publications of the directory.

Best wishes for the gardening season, I hope to see many of you at our upcoming meetings.

*(Logistics did not allow for the inclusion of the Membership list with this issue.*

*Watch for it soon and make sure your name is included by renewing your dues now.)*

## Letters From Afar

I'm not sure if this qualifies as a Heather Note—probably more as a cry for help. As an absolute beginner to heather planting (put in a few this fall), I'd appreciate being put in touch with more experienced heatherites in my area (just outside of Philadelphia) since your meetings are geographically difficult for me.

I found Ms. Hiltz' article very informative and wondered if anyone can enlighten me about what heathers, if any, do well on a bank that gets morning sun. The heathers that turn reddish in the fall are especially welcome, cheering the gray of winter.

Thanks for any information you have.

Norma Lefkovitz

How am I to ignore your urgent requests for contributions to Heather Notes. I would like to give an answer to Starr Roxanne Hiltz, who in the last issue was searching for late flowering Calluna. She had found two good ones and I would like to suggest her to add some of the budflowers to her assortment. These start flowering in Sept. or Oct. and keep their color and attraction most of the winter.

To say the truth I have never been very fond of the budflowers and they are not popular in our country, which is not surprising as we a "normal" winter have snow from the beginning of Dec. The last winters, however, with hardly any snow, they could have been much pleasure.

The older cultivars of this type have not

very striking colours, but in the last few years, there have appeared on the market on the Continent some really good new budflowers. 'Melanie' is white and comes from Kramer like the red-flowering 'Romina'. Other red budflowers are 'Redbud', 'Roswitha' and 'Marlies', the two first ones apparently identical. We are looking forward to an introduction of another red plant from Kramer, which has big buds of an excellent color and which flowers profusely. The name of this top plant is not yet officially published.

These new cultivars have much increased the interest in budflowers, and they will probably in due time find their way to the US too. What Roxanne can do until then is to try a couple of the best older ones. There are certainly nurserymen who can give advice. I was just out looking at my 'Roodkapje'. Not bad at all for 3rd February.

With the risk you find me a nit-picker I would like to see 'Hoyerhagen' and 'Sir John Charrington' spelt like this.

Britta Johansson

I must tell you that I like Heather Notes very much. The type face has become more legible and the layout is very good.

What interested me in the fall/winter issue is an article that mentions St. Nick and its Oct. blooming. I have several St. Nicks I purchased from the Knights eight years ago. They were among my first heathers and they have never bloomed. They are most serene-hardly changing from season to season. Now in Feb. they are touched with mauve but the general impression is tweedy.

Thelma Cossutta

## In Appreciation of Harold W. Copeland

by Harry E. Bowen

I first met Harold W. Copeland in the late 60's after reading his delightful and informative book on growing heather and heath on Cape Cod. A phone call led to a hearty invitation to visit his gardens, five acres of horticultural enthusiasm set on a hilltop in Chatham. The setting was truly grand with a sweeping view to the east down across scrubby fields, the Chatham Inlet, and the barrier dunes, to the open Atlantic a half mile away.

Copeland started his working years as a stock boy in a shoe factory. He advanced through sales to the vice-presidency before retirement in 1956 because of ill health. In retirement he immersed himself in his gardens. He became an expert on European ginger, hybridized day lilies and experimented with the hardiness of magnolias, delved into roses and holly. And he discovered heather and heath.

H. V. Lawrence (Cape Cod Nurseries) of Falmouth, the leading horticultural enterprise on Cape Cod at that time, did landscape work and provided plants to Copeland. For many years they had offered a token five or six varieties of Calluna and Erica in their catalogue. In a moment of generosity, they gave him several and ask him to try them out in Chatham. He was immediately captivated. Nothing would do but to possess more and different varieties and species. Like the British gardeners, he wanted massive drift plantings to show his plants at their best. Enlisting professional help (quite possibly Arnold Arboretum for import authorization and John F. Letts and possibly other nurserymen in England for plant material) he charged into importing

cuttings for propagation.

Physically limited by now, he called upon Lawrence to assist. Imported cuttings were delivered directly to Lawrence with the understanding that they would supply his needs and keep the balance for their own purposes. His garden expanded as did their inventory.

In 1963 he published, by invitation, a brief account of his experiences with heath and heather on Cape Cod (*Arnoldia*; Vol.23:7, August '63). The article listed some seventy varieties of Calluna and Erica as well as *Bruckenthalia* and *Daboecia*. Before he was through, he had an inventory of 265 varieties, all also available to Lawrence. Not by accident, in that same year Lawrence's catalogue listed 17 varieties of Calluna and 19 varieties of Erica representing seven species and hybrids. Their inventory was to increase in the coming years until they closed the nursery in the 70's. Interestingly, all but one or two of the varieties listed by both Copeland and Lawrence were to be found also in Letts' "Handbook of Heaths and Heathers" in 1966, thus tending to confirm their English source.

The tide of interest in heather had been put firmly in motion by Copeland's work. Lawrence's closing was not to stop that tide. Neil Van Sloun, who had been in charge of propagation at Lawrence's, was to leave to establish Sylvan Nursery in Westport, MA. in 1966. He took with him a stock of heathers which he supplemented with cuttings from Copeland. He soon became the largest supplier of heather in the northeast, thus extending the

interest well beyond Cape Cod. George MacKinnon also worked at Lawrence's. When he retired, he set up the thriving Waquoit Heather Nursery in Falmouth continuing Lawrence's specialty of field-grown plants. It is likely that the availability of all this fine material was paramount in promoting the public interest. That very public interest had much to do with the later development of the large mail-order business of the Rock Spray Nursery in Truro, MA., itself further widening the range of interest in heather.

Harold Copeland directly infected me with the heather bug. I am grateful for that. More importantly, he is probably largely responsible for the awakening of interest on the Cape. That interest has moved outward, wavelike, through the activities of people like Van Sloun at Sylvan, the MacKinnon's at Waquoit, and Kate Herrick at Rock Spray. David Smith, now retired from White Flower Farm in Connecticut, fondly remembers many visits to Copeland's gardens for heather and other plants. It is likely that tracing the origin of others' involvement such as Environmentals in Long Island or Greta Waterman in Maine, might ultimately lead back to Copeland. His efforts may well have established the base on which the Northeast Heather Society rests.

Copeland died in 1974 and, shortly thereafter, his home was sold with the original house and gardens destroyed to make way for subdivision. They are no more. His book which led me to heather is no longer in the local libraries. Indeed, no one (including his daughter) seems ever to have heard of it. But I remember. I would like you to also.



## Heathers Abound in Germany

by Nancy A. Marshall

There are two reasons why I should not write this article for HEATHER NOTES. The first is that I am not yet a knowledgeable heatherizer and the second is that I am not the first heatherizer to visit Germany. Nonetheless, you said "HEATHER NOTES needs contributions" so here are some notes from our recent trip to Germany:

We found our German friends to be enthusiastic gardeners, both indoor and out. People don't have yards, they have gardens. Our hosts in Hamburg have a marvelous garden, a work of art replete with blooms for all seasons, a fish pond and some unusual azaleas. Crocuses, daffodils, snow drops, primula, pansies and early azaleas were already in bloom when we were there the third week in March. Other Hamburg hosts, who live in a lovely flat, were bonsai gardeners. Our friends in Bremen had a delightful flower garden and behind a screen of arbor vitae, a vegetable garden. This host's mother, along with many other ladies, wearing their garden hats and aprons, rubber gloves and boots, were already digging and planting in their immaculate gardens.

And then there was the heather! I'll bet every third gardener has at least a small mound of pink or white, much of which was in bloom. It was in city parks, in cemetery and grave plantings, around public buildings and historic buildings, in the country, in towns or cities. They seem to use it freely as a low maintenance border or filler. I didn't see a single marker or label, and I'm not yet sure of my heather varieties, so I could only say "Mostly it looks to be the same as what I see at home." It all looked terribly healthy and robust; I didn't see even one

brownish middle, no evidence of winter kill - not even a space where something brown might have been pruned out! Although this part of Germany is at the same latitude as Labrador, they usually have slightly milder winters and cooler summers than we do.

The southern, more mountainous part of Germany seems to have a climate more like ours. And the Bavarians and Black Foresters, just like on all the post cards, all have their window boxes and porch boxes (in addition to their gardens.) What do the Germans do with their window boxes in winter? They fill them with spruce, pine and — and heather! Mostly the non-winter hardy heather, which was perhaps a part of the summer arrangement; it simply freezes and looks wonderful in among the boughs and cones. You will know my house next winter: it will be the one with the heather and tannenbaum in the porch boxes.

## Herrick Honored

by Will Clarke

We had planned to show Kate Herrick our appreciation for her service as president and her many contributions to the NEHS by presenting her with a small gift at the winter meeting. Therefore, Judy Anmahian purchased a polished aluminum trowel and had it engraved with the words: "Kate Herrick, President, 1990-1992, Northeast Heather Society". Unfortunately, a freak snowstorm hit Kate's end of Cape Cod and it prevented her from attending the meeting.

In March, I found Kate at the Rock Spray booth at the New England Flower Show and delivered the trowel along with the following letter:

Dear Kate,  
In recognition and appreciation of your outstanding leadership and many contributions to the Northeast Heather Society, we present you with this, engraved, "silver" trowel. On behalf the membership and the board of directors allow me to extend our heartfelt thanks and warmest wishes for the future.

Will Clarke

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## Doing My Bit For Heather

by Ted Barraclough

How do you teach students to use computers? If they are students at the University of Connecticut, Ratcliffe Hicks School of Agriculture, you begin by having them type several pages on Erica and Calluna, using a word processor. My part time retirement job is teaching a course titled "Computers in Agriculture". About half of my students are interested in plants and will take a landscape design course. I

cannot overlook the opportunity to preach to them the gospel of heathers. The students interested in animals - who knows they may some day landscape their own homes. I also use a database exercise that looks remarkably like page from a Rock Spray catalogue.

Maybe we can't stamp out Blue Rug Juniper, but we can at least carve a niche for heathers.

## Winter Survey Results Covered In Depth

Heathers were covered any time from Nov. to early Jan. with about half covering in mid to late Dec. Several members noted that they wait for the ground to freeze but Walter Wornick covers before then. Walter covers recently planted heathers only, so he may be trying to maximize the time plants have to get established. Some respondents wait till after Christmas to cover when discarded trees are available

### *When do you remove cover?*

This is clearly a judgment call. While everyone removes the cover in March or April, nearly all said the exact timing depends on the weather and varies from year to year. Most advocate removing the cover gradually and Walter observed that "If removed too soon, plants will freeze. If left on too long, they will smother." Janet Miller removes cover "when *E. carnea* 'Pink Spangles' begins to bloom" (mid to late March in her zone 5 garden). I believe this technique of using bloom time indicators to schedule cultural practices is known as "phenology" and may be the best approach of all, plants being better observers of the weather than we are.

### *What USDA hardiness zone are you in?*

Not surprisingly, most of the respondents live in the colder zones. Ignoring the letter designations (since not all responses included them) we find three in zone 7, five in zone 6, six in zone 5 and Lyn Sternfels, in Maine, on the line between zones 4 and 5.

### *Do you generally have snow cover?*

The response can be summed up in two words: Not lately. Nearly everyone remarked on the lack of snow the past

*continued from page 1, column 3*

few years and several reported increased damage to the heathers as a result. It appears, however, that this year's snow fall may be back to "normal".

### *Do you typically have winter damage?*

This question was intended primarily to determine how much damage non-coverers tolerate but we didn't hear from that group. Even coverers experience some damage, mostly to plants either not covered or too tall to cover completely. Problems described were: tip burning, branch die-back and stem splitting.

### *Have you ever used anti-desiccant sprays on heathers and, if so, were you pleased with the results?*

Anti-desiccants (eg. Wiltproof™) are waxy substances intended to be sprayed on plants to slow water loss through the leaf surfaces. They are supposed to reduce winter injury by preventing dehydration. The usual recommendation is to spray twice each season - once in late fall and again in mid winter (but temperature must be above 40°F). The obvious appeal of these products is that the plants are visible, rather than covered.

As a group, we seem to have some interest in anti-desiccants but very little experience. Two of us used the spray on heathers, once each, without being able to draw any conclusions. Lisa Golymbieski, of Southbury, CT used them in lieu of any other cover this winter for the first time and promises to report on the results. Walter reports that he has "used it on some dwarf conifers with limited results. It is expensive and washes off in the first rain." This last is contrary to the manufacturers claims.

### *Which of your plants seem most susceptible/*

### *most resistant to winter damage?*

Members reported differences in hardiness related to species, cultivar, siting, age and other factors. I've listed the observations with the number of respondents in each category shown in parentheses. Most susceptible to damage: old, woody, plants (three); tall and/or exposed plants (four); Callunas or "heathers", in general, (two); new plantings (two). Specific varieties (reported once each except where noted): Callunas 'Blazeaway' (two), 'Robert Chapman', 'Tomentosa', 'H. E. Beale', 'Cuprea', 'Mousehole', 'Mrs. Pat', 'Finale', 'Radnor' and 'Tib'; Erica tetralix 'George Fraser'; *E. carnea* 'Springwood White' and 'Foxhollow'.

Least susceptible to damage: low plants (two); *E. carnea* varieties (seven); Heaths, in general (three), Erica darleyensis 'Darley Dale'; Callunas 'H. Beale', 'Martha Herman', 'Tomentosa', 'White Knight', 'No Name', 'Waquoit', 'Fox Hollow Wanderer', 'Pyramidalis', 'St. Nick', 'Silver Knight' and 'Silver Queen' and 'Rosea'.

*E. carnea* is clearly the hardiness champion and there is a suggestion that gray foliated Callunas are hardier and yellow less hardy than most. Some heathers appear on both lists and I wonder if some differences attributed to varieties aren't really due to age, exposure, or some other factor.

### *Conclusions*

Heathers, especially tall, old or exposed ones, are prone to damage in cold winter areas. Covering plants is an effective way of preventing or minimizing winter damage. *E. carnea* appears to be exceptionally hardy and may not require covering in all but the most brutal sites.

## Annual Meeting Planned

The 1993 annual/summer meeting has been set for September 11 and 12 at Heritage Plantation, Sandwich, MA. In addition to our heather garden, Heritage features an enormous collection of Dexter hybrid Rhododendrons, Daylily and Hosta display gardens and much more. Indoor attractions include an antique carousel, a military museum and antique automobiles.

Besides Heritage Plantation, we will visit the new heather garden in Osterville and some outstanding private gardens. The meeting will run from about lunch time on Saturday to Sunday afternoon, and you may want to see the sights before or after, so plan your stay accordingly. Details on registering for the meeting will appear in the summer issue.

Because Cape Cod is such a popular tourist destination, we urge you to book rooms as soon as possible. We are recommending that everyone stay at the Shady Nook Inn, 14 Rt. 6A, Sandwich, MA (1-800-338-5208 or 508-888-0499). The Shady Nook is very conveniently located and features a breakfast bar, pool, and other amenities. Rates are \$65/night for two people (mention that you are with the NEHS). You may cancel your reservation ten days, or more, in advance so, please, book a room now even if you are uncertain about attending.

Even swankier rooms, and an outstanding restaurant, are available at the nearby Dan'l Webster Inn (508-888-3622) for \$90-\$170/night. For information about camping, other lodgings and sightseeing, contact the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce (508-362-3225) or the Bourne-Sandwich Chamber of Commerce (508-759-3122).

## Winter Meeting Summary

The winter meeting was held Feb. 20, 1993 at the Worcester Library, Worcester, MA. The board of directors met prior to the main meeting and covered several subjects. Present were board members: Judith Anmahian, Harry Bowen, Will Clarke, George MacKinnon and Walter Wornick.

Walter reported that the treasury contains more than \$3600 and that 115 members have paid this year's dues. More members are renewing every day. There was considerable discussion about the newsletter and general agreement is that it is the primary benefit for most members and requires all our support. We agreed to update the list of member sources of heather plants and to publish it in *Heather Notes*. Also, the membership list will be sent with the spring issue. Walter is looking into the possibility of using colored paper to distinguish issues of the newsletter and also the feasibility of using recycled paper.

The spring meeting was set for May 1 at Smith College, with a program on heather research. The Annual meeting will be September 11-12 at Heritage Plantation on Cape Cod knowing that these dates conflict with the British Heather Society meeting. We are considering the possibility of one or two "mini-meetings" for summer and/or fall. Judy is working on these.

We are reviewing the status of our various display gardens and will publish a descriptive list in a future issue of *Heather Notes*. We informally approved spending about \$200 for a sign for the garden at the Berkshire Botanical Garden. Will Clarke was been ap-

## Spring Meeting Information

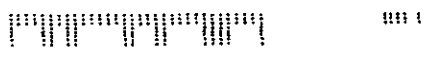
The spring meeting will be Saturday May 1, at Smith College, Northampton, MA. in the Lyman Plant House. We will hold an open board meeting at 10:00, followed by the general meeting and plant sale at noon. Beverages will be provided but please bring your own food. After lunch, Dick Munson (Director of the Botanic Garden at Smith College) will give a talk on heather research, including some suggestions for research projects that members might want to undertake. The meeting will conclude with a tour of the campus gardens.

The easiest way to get to Northampton is to take I-91 to the Route 9 exit. Follow Route 9 into Northampton and continue on it through the center of town towards Williamsburg. Smith College is located on both sides of the street. Turn left onto College Lane which is opposite the Smith College Chapel. The Lyman Plant House is on the left side of College Lane. Since parking is limited in this area, look for a spot on the main street.

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pointed the NEHS representative to the national organization and we agreed to authorize them to excerpt portions of *Heather Notes* for use in the "news of chapters" department of *Heather News*.

For the general meeting, the MacKinnons brought a tray of heaths and heathers, mostly new cultivars they have imported from Britain. Harry Bowen showed slides of the heather gardens at Heritage Plantation and The Cape Cod Horticultural Soc. (Osterville) and Walter showed spectacular slides from his latest trip to England. Also spectacular were the homemade breads, danish and brownies.



Dec-94  
ELINOR COHEN  
316 WOODLAND HILLS RD  
WHITE PLAINS, NY, 10603

*Daboecia*



ATTEND the spring meeting  
Smith College, Northampton, MA  
May 1, 1993 at 11:30 a.m.

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

FIRST-CLASS MAIL



*Members who don't come to meetings, do you think we are a bunch of old fogies who go around talking Latin a lot? Well then, come to the*

### Summer Picnic in Maine

Everyone is invited to the first annual NEHS summer picnic on Sunday, August 1, 1993 at Wolf's Neck State Park in Freeport, Maine: a purely informal meeting (no program!) for members who might like to bring a basket lunch and chat with other members while enjoying the lovely coastal vista and extensive Wolf's Neck heather beds in full bloom. 12 noon at the heather lawn - see you there!

From Portland, Maine, go north on Interstate 295 to Desert Road exit. At end of ramp, bear right onto Rt. 1 (Main St.) Freeport. You will see L.L. Bear on the left; turn right onto Bow St. directly across from Beans. This street becomes Flying Point Road, which you will stay on until you see signs for Wolf's Neck State Park. Turn right onto Wolf's Neck Rd and continue past entrance to the park. It will become a dirt road for a short distance and then back to paved road. Follow until you see a large parking area straight ahead (road veers to the left) and park by the large stone & white clapboard house. Heather planting is across the lawn beyond the house.