



Heather Notes

Volume 3

Number 2

Summer

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Northeast Heather Society

1993

In Brief

- Annual Meeting- Sept. 11-12, 1993
- Membership dues = \$5 annually
- Find a meeting site in your area
- NEHS membership down
- "Cutting Exchange" faltering
- Contributors needed-
- Lack of material = dead space

NEHS Plans First Summer Picnic

by Will Clarke

Everyone is invited to the NEHS first annual summer picnic on Sunday, August 1, 1993 at Wolf's Neck State Park in Freeport, Maine. We will convene at noon on the lawn. This will be a purely informal meeting (no program!) for members who might like to bring a basket lunch and chat with others while enjoying the lovely coastal vista and extensive plantings in Wolf's Neck heather beds. The heathers should be in full bloom.

Road, which you stay on until you see signs for Wolf's Neck State Park. Turn right onto Wolf's Neck Road and continue past the entrance to the park. The paved road becomes dirt for a short distance and then reverts back to paved again. Follow it until you see a large parking area straight ahead (the road veers to the left) and park by the large stone and white clapboard house. The heather planting is across the lawn just beyond the house.

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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. Bean on the left; turn right onto Bow St. directly across from Bean's. This street becomes Flying Point

Walter Wornick reminds us that the heather garden at the Bowdoin College Library is nearby and worth seeing. He also suggests that the NEHS should provide something for the picnic so drinks will be "on the house"

From Your Editor

Will Clarke informed me that **Heather Notes** was the hot topic at the spring board meeting. It seems that some members are upset when an issue is late or not published. I would like to explain the editing process to these members so that they can understand why an issue might be late or not published.

I can only edit material that is submitted to me. Either there is no copy submitted or what is submitted misses the deadline. There has also been a proposal to change the deadlines for copy submission. When I assumed the editorship of our newsletter, I arbitrarily set them to coincide with my personal schedule. I have a full-time job, maintain two households and have other demands on my time.

Maybe some of you don't understand how much time it takes to prepare publication. First, all material has to be entered into my computer memory. This is relatively easy when the material is submitted on a 3.5 inch, Macintosh disk; a little harder when submitted in an IBM compatible form. Typed material either has to be retyped or scanned into the memory if it is clean and clear. And scanning requires using equipment which I don't own. Still, scanning beats sitting at the computer keyboard!

After all copy is in computer form, I have to edit it for clarity and format. Next comes the layout. That is the task of deciding what to put where and getting the material to fit its

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From Your President

Last winter I said that felt like Adm. Stockdale "Who am I and what am I doing here?". Now, I see more parallels with Bill Clinton and, unfortunately, I don't mean our hair. I'm thinking about struggling to deliver on promises made. We are determined to get *Heather Notes* out on a regular basis, to give plenty of advance notice of meetings and to mail you a membership list. Thank you for your patience and on to more interesting subjects.

Hopefully, you set out a lot of (or at least a few) new heathers this spring. I'm always a little daunted by how plants that look so robust in the pot practically disappear in the wide open spaces of a new bed. One of gardening's persistent maxims is "The first year they sleep, the second year they creep and the third year they leap." and heathers are no exception. Sometimes it's hard to believe that the little plants we start with will ever reach the size listed in the catalogs. I only began planting heathers about five years ago, so many of "my" plants (most of which are growing in other peoples' gardens) are just hitting their stride. Last year three plants of C. v. 'H. E. Beale', in their third season, finally put on a spectacular display. As the client put it: "Even my wife noticed them."

If you still have doubts, come to the annual meeting this September. The garden at Heritage Plantation was planted (in the rain) in April, 1990. The 260 plants, mostly from 4" pots, were set 24" apart (in the rain). I must admit they looked a little lonely (especially in the rain).

This April, several members turned out to help Al and Nelda Doggert with the pruning

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Heather Notes

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Summer June 15

Fall Sept. 15

Winter Dec. 15

Spring March 15

President's Message

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(the sun!) and the challenge was to maintain a separation between the more vigorous cultivars, which are already growing together. Always she would have planted on 30, or even 36, inch centers if the garden wasn't in such a high visibility setting.

Of course, there are many factors effecting plant growth and water is probably the most critical, especially in establishing new plantings. In my own garden, with it's perfect drainage (translation: pure sand), heathers tend to creep for two years before picking up the pace. Charlie talks about the challenges of excess water in this issue.

Here's another maxim: water every day for the first week after planting, every other day for the second week, every third day for the third week and once a week after that. Try not to slack off in the "after that" period. The plants may be hard to see but they still need water. And don't depend too much on rainfall. Forecasted showers often fail to materialize or are too light to really soak the ground.

It is possible to over-water. A year ago I set out two dozen plants of *Calluna* 'Chase White' to replace heathers killed by salt water immersion during hurricane Bob. The client had a sprinkler system installed by someone else at about the same time and the soil turned out to be remarkably water retentive. Within a month the heathers were turning yellow and several died by the time we had straightened out the watering schedule.

The other important task in establishing a new planting is weeding. It's so much easier to keep ahead of the weeds than to "bring back" a garden that has been let go. This brings to mind the granddaddy of all gardening maxims: "Never plant a larger garden than your spouse can weed."

Heather and the Heaths

by Harry E. Bowen

***Calluna vulgaris*:** True heather or ling. Consists of a single species widely distributed over western Europe and the British Isles. Leaves opposite, in fours, densely imbricated. The four-sepaled calyx more showy than the much smaller corolla. Both calyx and corolla persistent. Flowers mostly in one-sided spikes or racemes. White, pink, shades of purple. Summer flowering from June through October, depending upon variety.

There are several hundred named varieties, differing widely in habit, size, foliage color and flower.

***Erica*:** This genus contains over six hundred species most of which are found in the Cape of South Africa. Only twelve or fifteen are native to Europe and the British Isles. Flowers are bell-shaped (resembling blueberries) and the corolla dominates over the smaller calyx. Leaves vary from short needles resembling those of the fir to narrow pointed pins. They are in loose whorls, never imbricated.

***E. carnea*:** Alpine forest heath, Mountain heath, winter heath. Distributed throughout alpine areas of western Europe. Leaves flattened needles in whorls of four. Flowers in densely clustered downward pointing bells. Blooms in winter, Christmas through May, depending variety. Low-growing, spreading habit. There are numerous varieties.

***E. ciliaris*:** Dorset heath. Leaves small, flattened, hairy needles (giving it a grayish color and "sticky" feeling). Plants are low growing. Branches very slender giving it a "wiry" appearance. Leaves in whorls of three. Flowers, among the largest of the heaths, borne in small terminal clusters from June through

October depending upon variety.

***E. cinerea*:** Bell heath, Scotch or Gray heath. Tiny, pin-like leaves in whorls of three. Compact plants six to twelve inches high. Tiny flowers in small terminal clusters. Among the varieties are some of the earliest bloomers of the summer and the longest standing in flower.

***E. tetralix*:** Cross-leaved heath. Like *cinerea* and *ciliaris*, native to the British Isles. Leaves in whorls of four (thus the name), hairy and grayish in color. Bushy habit. Flowers in clusters blooming modestly throughout the summer.

***E. vagans*:** Cornish heath. Native to the British Isles. Leaves in fours or fives, narrow and smooth. Racemes long and cylindrical maturing progressively from the bottom up. Anthers protrude from the bell-shaped corolla. Blooms July - October.

***Bruckenthalia spiculifolia*:** Native to the Balkans. Spreading plants less than six inches high with numerous erect spikes. Leaves tiny, pinlike. Pink flowers, also tiny, borne in dense terminal clusters. Very early to bloom (May-June), then periodically throughout the summer.

***Daboecia cantabrica*:** St. Dabeoc's heath or Connemara heath. Native to western Ireland and NW Spain. Leaves narrow ovate, much larger and quite different from the other heaths. Bell-shaped flowers, one half inch long, cluster at the top of the stem. Unlike all other heaths, the flowers are not persistent.

Heathers and Heaths : The Twenty Best

Joyce Descloux conducted a poll of the membership of the North American Heather Society to determine the most popular heathers and heaths. The results, previously published in "Heather News" Vol. 13, No.3, Summer, 1990, are listed below.

	Ht x Width	Bloom	Season	Remarks
CALLUNA (heather)				
H. E. Beale	30" x 24"	Dbl shell pink	Aug-Oct	Silvery green, upright.
Kinlochcruel	10" x 20"	Dbl white	Aug-Sep	Bright green, spreading.
Robert Chapman	10" x 30"	Mauve	Jul-Sep	Gold to reddish, spreading.
County Wicklow	10" x 20"	Shell pink	Jul-Sep	Green, mounding.
Tib	10" x 20"	Dbl deep pink	Jul-Oct	Dark green, spreading.
Gold Haze	18" x 20"	White	Aug-Sep	Yellow, upright.
Cuprea	12" x 16"	Lilac	Aug-Sep	Chartreuse to coppery, upright.
Silver Queen	18" x 24"	Lavender	Aug-Sep	Silvery gray, spreading.
White Knight	18" x 20"	Lilac	Aug-Sep	Silvery gray, upright.
Blazeaway	18" x 24"	Mauve	Aug-Sep	Gold to red, spreading.
ERICA (heath)				
E. carnea				
'Springwood White'	8" x 24"	White	Jan-May	Bronze tips spring, spreading
E. x darleyensis				
'Silberschmelze'	18" x 36"	White	Oct-May	Dark green bushy.
E. tetralix				
'Alba mollis'	8" x 12"	White	Jun-Sep	Gray-green, bushy
E. x darleyensis				
'Furzey''	15" x 20"	Rosy pink	Nov-May	Dark green, preading.
E. carnea				
'Springwood Pink'	8" x 20"	Pink	Jan-May	Bronze tips spring, spreading.
E. cinerea				
'Eden Valley'	12" x 24"	Wht/lav bicolor	Jun-Sep	Light foliage, bushy.
E. vagans				
'Mrs. D. F. Maxwell'	18" x 20"	Cherry	Jul-Sep	Dark green, bushy.
E. carnea				
'Vivellii'	9" x 15"	Deep pink	Jan-May	Dark green, spreading.
E. cinerea				
'C. D. Eason'	9" x 15"	Reddish pink	Jun-Sep	Dark green, bushy.
E. x williamsii				
'P. D. Williams'	12" x 20"	Lilac pink	Jul-Oct	Green, gold tips, bushy.

Society Member Heather Source List

by Shirley Redington

Though the following list includes only members of the Northeast Heather Society, their inclusion does not imply the Society's endorsement of these sources. If any members have been inadvertently left out or if corrections are in order, notify the author so that corrections may be made to future revisions of the list. Cady's Falls Nursery, RD 3 Box 210(Morrisville, VT 05661 Phone: (802) 888-5559

Display gardens and growing fields are open 10: AM - 6 PM from early May through mid-August. Otherwise by appointment. Retail. No mail order. Free list.

Daystar, Litchfield-Hallowell Rd., RD 2 Box 250, Litchfield, ME 04350 Phone: (207) 724-3369

Display gardens open by appointment. Retail. Mail order. List free to members of the NEHS

Environmentals, Box 730, Cutchogue, NY 11935 Phone: (516) 734-6439 Wholesale.

The Heather Garden, 16 Roland Kimball Rd., Freeport, ME 04032 Phone: (207) 865-3618 Retail. Mail order. Free list.

Heaths and Heathers, Box 850, Elma, WA 98541 Phone: (206) 482-3258 Retail. Mail order. Free list.

Perennials From Susan, 58 Seaverns Bridge Rd., Amherst, NH 03031 Phone: (603) 424-2300 Display gardens open Wed. through during growing season. Retail. No mail order. Free list.

Rock Spray Nursery, Box 693, Truro, MA 02666 Phone: (508) 349-6769 Garden shop open April I through fall on Depot Road. Retail. Mail order. Catalog includes cultural advice.

Sylvan Nursery, 1028 Horseneck Rd., Westport, MA 02790 Ph: (508) 636-4573 or 5615 Retail. Mail order. Contact nursery for details.

Waquoit Heather Nursery, Box 3214, Waquoit, MA 02536 Phone: (508) 548-6979 LIST OF HEATHERS IS \$1.50 Retail, but plants larger than 2 1/2 " and 3 1/2 " pot size must be picked up at the nursery, 131 Carriage Shop Rd. Willship small plants. Display gardens.

Wychavon Nursery & Gardens, 22 Winchester Ave, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3P 2C8 Phone: (902) 477-5203

Plant Fair Planned

by Will Clarke

On Saturday, Aug. 7, the NEHS will be participating a "Plant Society Fair" at the Berkshire Botanical Garden in Stockbridge, MA. The fair is billed as an opportunity to: "network with other plant societies; increase membership in your association; display and/or sell publications and plant materials; explore the garden's 15 acres of display gardens and greenhouses; and enjoy the gardens annual summer festival which draws large crowds and features music and other festivities.

Thanks to Shirley Redington, we have a fine display of young heathers at the garden so I think we can expect a lot of interest. Shirley will be helping set up our display before running off to some silly rock garden function and Kate Herrick has agreed to represent us and provide plants to sell, but more volunteers are needed. It sounds like a fun day and the garden is well worth seeing. So, if you'd like to help, please contact Shirley at 518-374-4707.

Editor's Message

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assigned place. Additional editing is usually necessary to get the copy to fit. Sometimes, manipulating tracking and set width will do this and other times the material has to be condensed or expanded.

When the layout is finished, the newsletter has to be printed on a laser printer which is another piece of equipment I don't own. (Remember the early issues which were printed on my dot matrix printer?) Then the final copy must be sent to Walter Wornick for final printing and distribution. The entire process from start to finish is labor intensive, time consuming and subject to many of the same variables as heather gardening. Thirty to forty hours is the average amount of time I spend on each issue.

When the complaints, restrictions and non-participation become too burdensome to me, you will have to find yourselves a new editor. After all, when an organization of more than 200 people has to depend on the writings of the same few people, how important can their Society's newsletter be?

Too Much of a Good Thing

By Charlie Gardiner

At the fall meeting in Binghamton, Charlie Gardiner mentioned a new planting of his and the steps he had taken to improve drainage in the area. Imagine having to divert water!

You asked about the progress of my "new" heather bed. It shocks me to find that I am not sure whether that project started two, or was it three, years ago. A short bit of history - An area in front of our house had always been an eyesore as far as I was concerned. Leggy Rhododendrons that were transplanted from the wilds of the Carolinas when the house was built almost fifty years ago, some old Taxus and Boxwood, volunteer shrubs of various undesirable varieties, English Ivy liberally intermingled with Virginia Creeper and, above all, a forest of bracken. I think it was the bracken that first gave me the idea that I wanted to grow heather when I saw the two co-habiting in England.

The opportunity to clear the mess came when the neighboring county club asked for an easement for a water line for their new irrigation system. In return for the easement they brought over their backhoe and cleared the area, which was adjacent to where the water line was installed. This gave me two hillside areas next to the driveway with north-northeast exposure. Each bed measured about twenty-five or thirty feet on a side, triangular in shape. What else but plant more heather?

The east side of Cleveland, away from the lake, is blessed with sub-soil of yellow clay, normally quite alkaline.

Under the best conditions I have found it necessary to augment the soil with compost, peat moss and perlite. This pre-conditioning worked out fine on one of the new beds, but the other was located over the area where the water line was installed five or six feet down. This area had the sub-soil brought to the surface and then packed down. I thought that tilling in the additives would make a nice soil structure for heaths, heather and dwarf evergreens - such are the dreams of fools!

Dwarf Rhododendrons, heaths and heathers all found this bed not to their liking, quietly passing on without any audible complaint. Since the afore-said fool and his money are soon parted (much to the gain of Rock Spray and Heather Acres), what else but buy more heathers and try again? While planting some of these new sacrificial lambs, the usual method was to dig five holes for five plants of the same cultivar. Finishing the fifth hole and proceeding back to the first to plant, I found that the holes were half full of water. This on a hillside with a slope of four or five feet in twenty! Not a leak in the new water line but just an aquifer flowing through the recently disturbed clay.

A french drain across the bed, extra deep planting holes with crowbar driven deeper and gravel in the bottom of the holes seems to have licked the problem. I suppose the problem may return when the silt from the clay fills the pores in the gravel in the planting holes and the french drain, but the next owner can worry about that.

Annual Meeting Planned

Dates: Sept. 11 & 12, 1993

Location: Heritage Plantation, Sandwich, MA

Registration: \$30.00 includes dinner Sat., \$15.00 without dinner. Please make check payable to NEHS and mail to: Will Clarke, 28 Longview Rd., N. Falmouth, MA 02556 and you will be sent maps and other information.

Preliminary Schedule of Activities:

Saturday

10:00 AM: Board Meeting (open to members)

11:30 AM: Lunch and General Meeting

1:30 PM: Tour Heritage Plantation
Social Hour

Dinner

Sunday

Waquoit Heather Nursery

Osterville Display Garden

"San Mai An" (A Japanese style garden in Harwichport with many heathers, exceptional dwarf conifers, and much more.)

Lodging:

As reported in the Spring issue, we are recommending the Shady Nook Inn (1-800-338-5208 or 508-888-0499, \$65/night for two). However, a problem developed in that they will not accept reservations for Saturday night only. If you only need accommodations for the one night we are recommending the Spring Garden Motel (508-888-0710, \$46/night for two). It is a charming small motel and, at three miles from Heritage, only a little less convenient. We regret this confusion and if you have any problem making reservations please call Will at 508-563-3215.



Bruckenthalia spicata



Daboecia cantabrica



Erica tetralix



Erica carnea
'Springwood White'



Calluna vulgaris - Heather

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FIRST-CLASS MAIL



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