

Heather Notes

April, 2000

Volume 10, Number 2

ISSN 1086-8925

Heather Notes
Members
Directory Issue

Contents

Pruning Without Fear

by Harry Bowen

Pruning of heath and heather is done for several reasons: to remove old blossoms and the wood they were borne on, to remove dead or damaged wood, and to attempt to control the plant's growth. In the northeast this is best accomplished in spring when winter's severe cold is past but before new growth appears—March on Cape Cod. Delaying it may interfere with flowering (flower is limited new wood); pruning too early may expose sensitive wood to damage should a cold snap occur.

The technique is simple. Inspect the plant looking for a "no growth zone." This will be marked by either the still persistent dead flowers or, if the flowers have already fallen, a bare zone with neither flowers nor leaf in the terminal growth. No new growth will occur in this zone. The pruning line should lie just below this zone. In theory new growth at the cut will be followed by two or more branchlets, each bearing flowers. Good flowering and a compact and manageable plant are the results. Failing to prune will, in a few years, produce a "leggy" plant with a tendency to collapse and definitely with fewer blossoms.

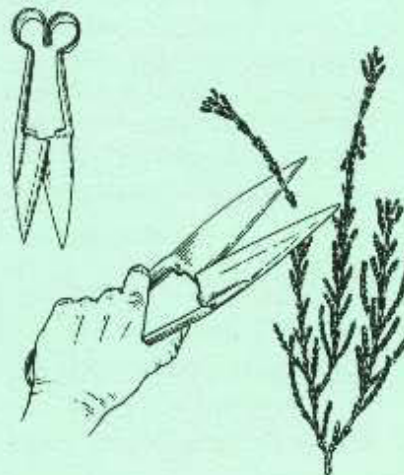
The pruning cut should lie just below the "no growth zone" on each branch of heather, as illustrated in this drawing by NEHS member Bobbi Angell of Vermont.

Most *Callunas* should be pruned annually. The prostrate forms ('Mrs. Ronald Gray', 'Clare Carpet', 'White Lawn', etc.) probably need no pruning. *Erica carnea* does not produce a no growth zone; therefore, it need not be pruned. Lateral pruning as needed may control its habit of continual outward growth. *Erica tetralix* and *E. vagans* should be pruned just the same as *Calluna*.

While pruning off last year's growth, simply follow the contours of the plant. This will produce a rounded plant, somewhat rigid at first, but quickly becoming soft and graceful as new growth appears. If planted in masses of one variety, I like to prune the tops uniformly flat and reserve lateral pruning for the peripheral plants.

Removal of dead or damaged wood is best done with ordinary pruning shears. Pruning of last year's growth calls for sheep shears or, even better, a battery-operated "shrubber" (Black & Decker.)

Above all, "be not afraid." If you do make mistakes, and you will, the plant is smart enough to repair the harm in a very short time. ☺



© 2000 NEHS. All rights reserved.

- 1 Pruning Without Fear
Harry Bowen
- 2-3 Editorial pages
- 4 Invitation to a
Summer Meeting
Judi Segebarth
- Special Horticultural
Events
- 5 In Clarence Hay's
Rock Garden
Bunny vanValey
- NEHS Membership
Benefit
- 6 Spring and Summer
Meeting Notices

Heather Notes is
published
quarterly by the
Northeast Heather
Society

*Annual dues are \$10,
payable to the treasurer*

Officers

Molly Martin, president
Whitaker Farm Road
PO Box 14
Marlboro, VT 05344
(802) 254-6209
molar56@sover.net

Judy Doyle, vice president
85 Maynard Road
Brooklyn, CT 06234
(860) 774-4250
radoyle@snet.net

Marjorie Walsh, secretary
1270 Hallowell-Litchfield Rd.
West Gardiner, ME 04345
(207) 724-3369

Betty Dayton, corresp. sec.
63 Hickory Hill Circle
Osterville, MA 02655
(508) 428-1563
edayton@cape.com

Carol Rollet, treasurer
1066 Paper Street
Suffield, CT 06078-2346
(860) 668-2772
rollet1066@aol.com

Back issues of Heather Notes
and several interesting
publications from the British
Heather Society are available
for a small fee.
Additionally, there is a supply
of out-of-print books
about heather, for sale
to members only.
For a list of items,
please contact the secretary.

From the president

by Molly Martin

Recently letters went out to last year's NEHS volunteers asking if they would continue in their various roles for another year. Our collective thanks to those who said 'yes.' To those who are taking a year off, we'll welcome you back whenever you're ready.

One of the best things about volunteering in this society is that you get to call the shots. There's absolutely no over-sight committee, no list of guidelines, no final report and no fundraising, although the latter might be nice. You determine how much or how little you can manage and do that to the best of your ability. Please take a look at the list of opportunities below and consider volunteering for one or more of these no-nonsense activities.

Open Garden Hosts volunteer to open their gardens to visitors by appointment. (A notation on the membership list identifies NEHS gardens open this year.)

The Speakers' Bureau accepts requests and delivers heather programs with the option of using one of the three NEHS slide presentations available to members.

The NEHS Network develops educational and public relations opportunities and acts as liaison to the board.

Meeting Hosts hold seasonal meetings at their homes. (See details for a special July gathering on page 4.)

The Program Committee works to identify sites and develop programs for the year's meetings.

If you have questions about any of these activities, please contact me or a board member. This is your invitation to become a volunteer and to help us spread the word about heather. ☪

Letter to the editor

To the editor:

A major expansion project is underway for the heather garden at Merry Spring Horticultural Park in Camden, Maine. You may remember the 1999 annual meeting of NAHS and NEHS was held at Merry Spring last September.

Ann Carroll, an experienced professional gardener, has taken over as chairman of the garden committee. Ann has designated a large sloped area adjacent to the existing three-year-old heather bed as an expansion area for

more heather. This will double the number of plants and greatly enhance the heather garden.

I am writing to the nurseries who kindly donated plants three years ago, and I welcome any donations from other NEHS members.

Please contact me at 6 Roland Kimball Road, Freeport, ME 04032, phone number (207) 865-9818.

Sincerely, Greta Waterman

Welcome, new members

Ilse M. Repanshek, Brewster, MA
Mary Higgins, Candia, NH
George & Shirley Snyder, Sodus, NY

Elizabeth T. Leavitt, Burlington, MA
John Segedy, Hillsboro, NH
Mary Reid-Miller, New York, NY

NEHS Slide Show Reminder

Spring is here, and so is the time when all plant societies are eager to present their wares to the public.

Please be reminded that we have two 35 mm shows ready to distribute:

1. "Heath and Heather 101" is designed as a basic course including plant identification, cultural demands, planting, gardens and propagation.
2. "The Heather Garden" with emphasis on the garden, covering plant identification, garden design, planting and after-care, and a large group of gardens to round out the picture.

Write, or better, phone:

Harry Bowen
30 Chase Road
Falmouth, MA 02540
(508) 548-3113

Make your reservations early. It only requires a \$15.00 deposit which will be refunded as soon as you return the slide and script set in good condition. Slides will be sent out 7-10 days before your presentation date, and should be returned immediately—a turnover time of about two weeks. ☞

Directory feature:

Heather Sources

Rock Spray Nursery PO Box 693, Truro, MA 02666-0693 phone (508) 349-6769. Mail order year-round or walk-in at the Garden Shop on Depot St., Truro, April through October. 44-page color catalog is the best textbook you'll find, \$2. Also an excellent web site: www.rockspray.com

Waquoit Heather Nursery Box 3214, Carriage Shop Rd., Waquoit, MA 02536-3214 phone (508) 548-6979. An incredible variety of heaths and more than 200 heather cultivars alone. Sales by walk-in (3½" pot for \$4) and some mail order. Plant list at \$1.50 is free to NEHS members.

My Neighbor's Garden 85 Maynard Rd., Brooklyn, CT 06234 phone/fax (860) 774-4250. Retail, walk-in sales, several display gardens and an increasing variety of heathers. Open mid-April through 1st Saturday in July only.

Heaths & Heathers E 502 Haskell Hill Rd., Shelton, WA 98584-8429 phone (800) 294-3284. Mail order only, year-round. Huge variety of cultivars in a 12-page plant list at \$1, free to NEHS members. Online order form at www.heathsandheathers.com

Editor's note:

Many NEHS members—actually about 25 to 30 of them—listed in the enclosed directory are also business owners. Because of composition space constraints, their business address could not be included.

Nursery owners, designers, or wholesale or retailers who are members are invited to write a bit about themselves for inclusion in a future issue of *Heather Notes*.

If you believe in free advertising, getting a little extra value for your money, and the usefulness of letting people know about what you have to offer, then send your information to the editor, address at right, this page.

Given that a positive response flows from this invitation, readers can expect a special "business sheet" insert in an upcoming HN.

Now please don't make a liar out of me!

J.W.

Directors

Harry Bowen
30 Chase Road
Falmouth, MA 02540
(508) 548-3113

Barberie "Bunny" van Valcy
Mink Hill Farm
203 Gould Road
Warner, NH 03278
(603) 456-3619
bhvv@conknet.com

Dr. Mark C. Starrett,
technical advisor
University of Vermont
Hills Science Building
Burlington, VT 05405-0082
(802) 656-4567
mark.starrett@uvm.edu

Judy Wiksten, editor
9 Tispaquin Street
Middleboro, MA 02346-3337
(508) 947-1109
tispaquin@msn.com

All submissions to *Heather Notes* will be considered for publication, and may be edited for clarity and length. Please include your name and phone number so that you can be contacted in the event that more than minor editorial changes are necessary.

Deadlines for each issue

January.....Dec. 20
April.....March 20
July.....June 20
October.....Sept. 20



Special Horticultural Events

Connecticut- "Getaway Gardens Weekend" May 5,6,7. Twenty something area nurseries and garden centers are participating, with special events, tours, lectures and workshops. For more information, contact Judy Doyle at My Neighbor's Garden (see page 3) or Michelle Mineo at the Northeast Visitors District, tel. (888) 628-1228 or (860) 938-1228.

New Hampshire- "A Tour of New London Gardens" July 15. Self-guided tours from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., rain or shine, feature unique private gardens in the New London area. Admission includes tea at The Fells from 3-4 p.m. For advance tickets call the Friends of the John Hay National Wildlife Refuge, (603) 763-4789, or purchase higher priced tickets on the day of the tour at The Fells.

CR

Invitation to a Summer Meeting by Judi Segebarth

Dear Heather Society Members,

I would like to extend a personal invitation to the Tea Garden, our home and business in Stevensville, PA. The occasion? The Saturday, July 8, 2000 meeting of the NEHS.

Located in northeastern Pennsylvania, the beautiful Endless Mountains are haven to the Tea Garden's 80 acres of rolling river valley. We have turned our award-

The gardens are also laboratory and model for my weekly garden columns and photography.

winning gardens into an organic educational center and nature sanctuary.

The gardens are also laboratory and model for my weekly garden columns and photography. Keith is my head gardener (and wonderful husband) when he's not analyzing a computer problem somewhere in the East. I am a retired "sky goddess," and thoroughly enjoy keeping my feet on the ground nowadays.

Please join us July 8th for a typical Tea Garden luncheon where the menu of the day is liberally enhanced with herbs from our land. After lunch we'll lead a tour of our various gardens including:

*Woodland walks and streambank strolls
gentle talks
or fishing poles.*

*An herb to nip
and a thirst to quench
or a tea to sip
on a restful bench.*

Perhaps you would prefer just to relax in the Tea House and listen to the liquid sounds of the water garden complete with footbridge and Koi carp. Or you could take a short walk to the Tiny House at Tree Tops, overlooking a riverbank refuge for birds and other notes of nature. (Tiny House has all the comforts of home except electricity and running water, of course.)

We have but a wee planting of heathers, but offer them to you nevertheless.

I hope you can schedule time on your journey to visit Cutler Botanic Gardens in Binghamton, NY (40 miles north of us.) Conveniently located off Interstate 81, Exit 5. Here you'll find display gardens of alpine, vegetable, herb, rose, perennial, trees and shrubs, and an established heather garden.

Accommodations: many B&B's. Anyone interested in specifics, please send me a self-addressed stamped envelope with your specific needs and I will do my best to return all pertinent information. Two good hotel choices are: the restored Victorian Wyalusing Hotel (8 miles away in Wyalusing) www.wyalusinghotel.com (570) 746-1204; the Shadowbrook Resort in Tunkhannock, Rt. 6 (40 miles away) has everything from ice cream to golf. www.shadowbrookresort.com (800) 955-0295.

We hope to see you at the Tea Garden on Saturday, July 8th.

Judi Segebarth and Keith Jones
Rt. 706, Stevensville, PA 18845
(570) 746-3807
heyjude@epix.net CR



In Clarence Hay's Rock Garden

by Bunny vanValey

Clarence Hay, second son of John Milton Hay, apparently had an innate interest in plant material and the landscape around him at The Fells, his father's summer retreat on Lake Sunapee in Newbury, New Hampshire. His parents never felt compelled to "landscape" around their retreat cottage, but there were acres of natural woodland along the edge of the lake and the immediate abandoned fields were returning to forest. We feel these elements had a profound influence on Clarence's gardening concepts. The farmers who cultivated these fields had picked up and gone west where tons of rock did not have to be removed from the soil before cultivation could be practical!

While at Harvard Clarence studied under Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr. In 1909 he set about designing and building a formal garden surrounded by high stone walls. There are four entrances to this garden, each of which welcomes one into axised areas and then beckons one to exit farther into the woodlands.

Outside these walls he planted scores of rhododendrons, laurels and azaleas, and sprinkled in enkianthus, boxwood, yews and pieris, adding many deciduous shrubs, mostly natives. Fortunately he chose Kousa dogwoods which are now magnificent mature trees **not** susceptible to the anthracnose infection which is devastating *Cornus florida*, the usual choice when Clarence was planting.

In 1926 he started his rock garden, which would be his major contribution to The Fells landscape. With this ¾ acre garden, he left a plant file with more than 650 entries. Within the file are heather listings for 85 *Calluna vulgaris* 'Elata' from Kelsey in 1931, three *Calluna vulgaris* 'Minima' from Mayfair in 1954, six *Calluna vulgaris* 'Hypnoides

alba' from Kelsey in 1929, and five *Erica* (believed to be *Calluna*) *vulgaris* 'Nana' from Mayfair in 1928 and 1930. A footnote says, "Many plants of *vulgaris* & *v. alba* started about 1925 & transplanted in fl. July & Aug." There are three large areas of heather which appear to have been introduced, but there are several areas we feel quite certain seeded themselves. For the last four years we have positive proof of self-seeding, which leads us to believe the possibility of self-seeded areas!

Since 1996 the Northeast Heather Society has come to prune the largest of the heather beds and the individual heathers within the rock garden itself. This will happen again this year on April 29th starting at 11 a.m. The meeting is open to those who wish to join in the pruning, or just to observe. We are happy to announce that lunch will be provided for those who let us know at least one week in advance.

You will learn pruning techniques from many veterans. If you wish to join in, please bring your own shears with work gloves and knee pads. Keep in

**For the last four years
we have positive proof of
self-seeding, which
leads us to believe the
possibility of self-seeded
areas.**

mind the weather can be nippy, so dress accordingly in layers. Looking forward to seeing you then!

Barberie "Bunny" vanValey
Mink Hill Farm
203 Gould Road
Warner, NH
(603) 456-3619
bhvv@conknet.com



NEHS Membership Benefit

Did you know that NEHS is a member of Tower Hill Botanic Garden in Boylston, MA? As a plant society member, we have received 4 standing passes, for use by any of our members. That means a small army of heather enthusiasts—or at least you and three friends—could make a day trip to the Tower.

If you missed the winter meeting, you could check out the gorgeous new *orangerie*, stroll the springtime gardens, have a bite at the Terrace Cafe, and still have time for a look into the well-stocked gift and garden shop.

For more details, contact treasurer Carol Rollett, address on page 2.



Spring Meeting

Saturday, April 29

Newbury, NH

11 a.m.

This is the annual pruning party at The Fells, one of New England's finest examples of an early 20th century garden (see page 5 for full description.)

Directions: From the north, take I-89 to exit 12 and drive south on Rt. 103A. The estate will be on your right.

From the south, take Rt. 3 north to I-93 north, to I-89 north to exit 9. Follow Rt. 103 west to Bradford and then north to Newbury. At Newbury follow Rt. 103A north a few miles, and the estate will be on your left.

We'll meet at the gatehouse.

Don't forget to call garden hostess Bunny vanValey at least a week in advance, so she can make luncheon arrangements. ☞

Summer Meeting

Saturday, July 8

Stevensville, PA

11 a.m.

Garden hostess Judi Segebarth will need to hear from you prior to our scheduled visit to the Tea Garden in northeastern Pennsylvania. (Details on page 4.)

Located halfway between Binghamton, NY and Scranton, PA, Stevensville is about an hour's drive from either city.

Directions: From I-81, take exit 67 for Rt. 706 toward Milford/Montrose. Stevensville is approximately 20 miles west of Montrose, and Judi's driveway is ¼ mile east of the post office, still on 706. Look for the small sign for the Tea Garden at the top of the driveway, as Judi's home and business is not visible from the main road.

Send Judi a note, so she'll know how many to expect for lunch! ☞

Northeast Heather Society

1066 Paper Street

Suffield, CT 06078-2346