

Heather Notes

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Contents

- 1 New Heathers for Heritage Garden
Harry Bowen
- 2 Heather Exchange Planned
Nancy Passavant
- 3 Guest Column
Judi Segebarth
- 4 Conference Plans: A Heather Show
Nancy Passavant
- 5 Annual Conference & Registration Form
- 6 Summer Picnic Notice

New Heathers for Heritage Garden by Harry Bowen

When Heritage Plantation of Sandwich, MA opened for the season on Mother's Day weekend this year, it ushered in a bold new schedule of public access year-round from now on.

It also put on display a brand-new heather garden tucked into a friendly slope in the rhododendron dell—a project sponsored by NEHS members and cooperating heather nurseries.

Nearly 300 tiny plants are putting down roots in their new home and promise to grow into a pleasing display garden with year-round interest. Members can see for themselves when they come to the NEHS summer picnic July 17 (see page 6 for details.)

Let me begin this tale by commenting on just how challenging a task this was for Heritage chief horticulturist Jeanie Gillis, and just how well she worked with us. Jeanie was wonderful. She oversaw the clearing of the old heather beds, removal of the former pebble walkway, composting, rototilling and everything necessary to get the area ready for planting in early May.

The garden was laid out the day before planting—pathways marked, rounded boulders of granite selected and placed in what seemed an attractive manner, and plants in pots distributed on the exact spot to be planted.

The work crew consisted of Jeanie Gillis, her intern, Sue, Vivagean Merz, Will Clarke and myself. We started about 1:00 p.m. and finished by 4:30 p.m. Plants were bedded down in the loose, composted soil and a few handfuls of wetted peat moss were mixed in

with the returning soil. We worked well, chatting as we went. We finished the work in time to see the sprinkler wetting down our new bed of heath and heather, some seven dwarf conifers from the original garden and the granite boulders. And like the Lord on the evening of the third day, we all agreed "It was good."

Donors who contributed \$854 in cash for the plant fund are Nancy Passavant, Harry Bowen, Joyce Descloux, Judy Wiksten, Ella May Wulff, George T. Bernard, Robert C. Seidler, Paul E. Rogers, Bernard Slofer and Elizabeth Dayton.

Nursery people who supplied the plants are Kate Herrick of Rock Spray Nursery, Truro; Karla Lortz of Heather & Heathers of Shelton, WA; Kelly Perry

Nearly 300 tiny plants are putting down roots in their new home and promise to grow into a pleasing display garden with year-round interest.

of Sylvan Nursery in Westport, MA and Edna and Mac MacKinnon of Waquoit Heather Nursery in Falmouth, MA. All were tremendously cooperative (often holding orders for weeks until we were ready,) searching for obscure cultivars, and finally in their generosity in pricing. We may think we did it all, but their cooperation really made the thing work.

Heritage Plantation supplied the workmen who prepared the bed, brought in peat moss and compost and the materials for the walkway.

The actual cost of the plants was \$841.08, so we actually came in by a \$12.92 whisker under budget, too. *

(photo on page 2)

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Annual dues are \$10, payable to the treasurer

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New little heathers planted in early May are coming along well in the NHHS-sponsored garden at Heritage Plantation of Sandwich, MA

Heather Exchange Planned by Nancy Passavant

Have you ever wanted to try a new heather, or perhaps add a duplicate cultivar to your collection? Now is your chance. NEHS is sponsoring its first heather exchange to be held at the fall conference in Connecticut.

To participate, you must bring a heath or heather that you propagated in 2001. You should also bring a 4"x 6" card that identifies the cultivar, your name and address, and gives the following additional information:

- ◆ Hardy from USDA zone ___ to ___
- ◆ Propagated in USDA hardiness zone ___ (what zone do you live in?)
- ◆ Height
- ◆ Spread (width)
- ◆ Growth habit (compact, spreading, upright, prostrate)
- ◆ Foliage color
- ◆ Winter foliage color
- ◆ Flowers: color and season. Are the flowers single, double, bud, bell-shaped?)
- ◆ Explanation of propagation technique with dates (cutting, layering, seed.) Did you grow it under

lights, using heat? Was it in a cold frame? When did you pot it up? In other words, please share with us any information you can.

- ◆ Original source of propagation material (was it taken from a plant of yours, did it come from a propagation workshop, or other.)

All propagated heathers and heaths must be turned in for the plant exchange by 4:30 on Friday evening, Sept. 13. The plants will then be judged by the plant exchange committee and sorted into classes based on a point system reflecting the health and size of each cutting.

For those of you whose cuttings are judged in the A (highest) category, you will be able to select a plant from the same category. If your submission is positioned in the B category, you may select a plant from the B category, etc.

We urge you to bring at least one plant you propagated for our first plant exchange. This is a great opportunity to learn the techniques of others, and to go home with a new plant! ◆

Guest Column

by Judi Segebarth

Our guest this issue is an NEHS board member, master gardener and a professional writer. Judi will be taking over as editor of Heather Notes this autumn.

On Water and Gardening

Call me sentimental, but I cherish water. Cherish it and respect it. When I was a schoolgirl my idea of luxury was running water, not running for it. Growing up in Iowa, I didn't have the luxury of indoor plumbing. I remember the hand pump next to the kitchen sink, and I remember bathing in a metal tub in front of the kerosene stove that feebly heated our small, un-insulated farmhouse. These reminiscences may sound like some Little-House-on-the-Prairie nostalgia, but I can tell you there is absolutely nothing romantic about a trip to the outhouse in the midst of an Iowa blizzard, during a sweltering July summer, or for that matter anytime! Yes, I think about water, every day, whenever I turn on a faucet or—egads—flush.

This year's drought warnings are, once again, poignant want ads for water conservation, which is something we should practice all the time, not just when the sky is cloudless and the reservoirs are low. Water conservation helps recharge our underground aquifers that are deeply taxed by our wasteful watershed ways.

As an organic gardener I'm already one step ahead of the water game. Organic practitioners are also firm believers in the power of mulch for keeping the soil from losing water to the atmosphere. Mulch does a triple dose of good by also suppressing weeds and slowly decomposing into more organic matter and plant nutrients.

As a relocated farmer's daughter turned gardener, I think a lot about how I use water in the landscape. Since I depend on the skies, not on my well, I employ water-wise gardening techniques and methods of using and storing water when rain falls elsewhere. Here are some of my water-saving tips for the garden and home.

- Rain barrels are great for collecting the hundreds of gallons of rainwater from roofs of houses, garages, barns and sheds. Rain barrels, however, must be child-proofed and managed to prevent mosquito breeding. I place two goldfish in my open 55-gallon barrels, so mosquito egg cases and larvae are immediately eaten. Floating a small block of wood or a large stick in the open container prevents drowning of bats or birds who may be tempted by open water. I've had to rescue both.
- Plant seedlings, shrubs and trees properly by adding water at root level. This forces roots to grow down for moisture. Dig the hole, place the plant, water, fill in the hole, firm the soil and mulch.
- Grow your grass longer. The root system is deeper, and therefore more drought tolerant.
- In the kitchen use a spatula. Scraping plates, bowls, pots and pans instead of rinsing before washing saves water.
- Heat just enough water for that cup of tea. No need to put on a full teapot when you need just a little. You'll be saving water and energy dollars at the same time.
- Flush less. Better yet, if you're able, invest in a composting toilet. I love my sawdust composting commode!
- And here's what we should already be doing—wash only full loads in the dishwasher, take showers, not baths (five minutes is enough time to get clean); wash cars using buckets, not hoses, forget about watering the lawn; buy a front-loading washing machine if you're in the market for a new one (they use 39% less water than a top loader!)

Today even though there's running water upstairs and down in my little house in the Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania I still respect water. I still cherish it. I spend my days with water on the brain, truly. I conserve so passionately that I swear my husband turns on the faucet sometimes just to vent off steam. ●

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All submissions to Heather Notes will be accepted for publication, and may be edited for clarity and length. Please include your name and phone number.

Deadlines for each issue:

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

How to Transport Your Heather Stems

If you are planning to bring stem specimens to the NEHS Fall Conference for the Heather Show, here is a tip from Joyce Prothero of the Vancouver Island Heather Society:

Just wrap them in a damp paper towel, pack them in a plastic bag and pop them in your suitcase. Heather travels easily (but probably daboecias would lose their bells.)

Conference Plans: A Heather Show

by Nancy Passavant

In conjunction with its fall conference in Connecticut, NEHS will hold its first heather show. Modeled on "Parlour Shows" developed by the Vancouver Island Heather Society, this show is a perfect opportunity to see the foliage and flowers of different heathers up close.

You might see some varieties you would like to add to your garden. And this is a chance to compare cultivation

For our first show, we are offering four judging classes.

and pruning techniques to improve the health or structure of your plants. Most of all, we hope you will have fun—and who knows, you may go home with a ribbon or two.

For our first show, we are offering four judging classes. Each class will be judged and awarded separately:

Class 1: Any single-flowered *Calluna* in flower, one to three stems, all from the same plant, judged for flowers.

Class 2: Any double-flowered *Calluna* in flower, one to three stems, all from the same plant, judged for flowers.

Class 3: Any *Erica* in flower, one to three stems, all from the same plant, judged for flowers.

Class 4: Container gardens. Each garden must contain a minimum of three plants, one of which must be a *Calluna* or *Erica*, judged for garden design and

health of plants.

There are no limits on the number of entries for each class. When you arrive at the NEHS fall conference on Friday, Sept. 13, you will be given a small container for each of your entries in Classes 1-3. For each entry in Classes 1-4, you will complete an entry slip. On one side you will write the class you are entering and the name of the cultivar if you know it, on the other side, hidden until judging is over, you will write your name.

The plant show will be judged on Friday night at the social hour. All NEHS members attending the conference will have a chance to judge, using the guidelines developed by the Royal Horticultural Society. We will compare the entries and award points for straightness of spikes, the symmetry of floret arrangement, whether most of the florets are open but not yet faded, and whether the foliage looks clean, brightly-colored and healthy.

When the judging is complete, we will pool the results. The winners will be announced at the end of the dinner, just prior to the presentation by Ella May Wulff of Oregon, president of the North American Heather Society.

So, before you set off for the fall conference, go out to your garden and select your entries. Remember, you can bring from one to three stems for each entry, but they must all be from the same plant. Tips for transporting heather stems in good health are described in the margin column at left.

We'll have lots of fun, and this will be a great learning experience for us all.

If you have any questions, please contact Nancy Passavant (617) 244-1762 with e-mail npassavant@aol.com

or Judy Doyle (860) 774-4250 with e-mail perennialherb@earthlink.net



NEHS Annual Conference

September 13-14, 2002

‘The Quiet Corner’ Northeast Connecticut

FRIDAY

2:00 p.m. Registration at Laurel House Restaurant (next to Holiday Inn.)

3:00 p.m. Board meeting, Laurel House Restaurant

5:30 p.m. Social hour in our meeting room, cash bar, fiddle music, plant and book sale

6:30 p.m. Dinner

7:30 p.m. Speaker with slide program: Ella May Wulff of Oregon, president of the North American Heather Society.

SATURDAY

8:45 a.m. Garden tour. Motor coach departs from the Holiday Inn.

12:00 noon Lunch at the Doyles'

5:00 p.m. Return to Holiday Inn

6:00 p.m. Cash bar at JD Cooper's Restaurant

6:30 p.m. Dinner at JD Cooper's

7:30 p.m. Membership meeting with election of officers. Raffle

Hope to see you there!

Lodging Information

Blocks of rooms are ready at these motels. Be sure to mention you're with NEHS.

Holiday Inn 16 Tracy Road, Dayville, CT 06241— exit 94 off Route 395

For reservations call 860-779-3200, or toll-free 1-800-465-4329. Rates start around \$130 for the rooms available for our weekend.

King's Inn 5 Heritage Road, Putnam, CT 06260— exit 96 off Route 395

For reservations call 1-800-541-7304 or 860-928-7961 fax 860-963-2463

Rates start at \$62 per person, much less expensive than the new Holiday Inn. The rooms are perfectly fine, and King's Inn is in a pretty location.

Conference Registration

Name _____

Address _____

phone _____ e-mail _____

Check attendance plans: Weekend _____ or Saturday only _____

Registration fee includes the Saturday bus tour and lunch. All fees are per person.

\$ _____ Registration fee...\$40

\$ _____ Friday dinner\$30

\$ _____ Saturday dinner...\$30

\$ _____ tourist information packet...\$3

\$ _____ Total enclosed. Make checks payable to **Northeast Heather Society**

Registration deadline is August 28, 2002. Please send registration form and payment to Judy Doyle, 85 Maynard Road, Brooklyn, CT 06234.

Ericas in Wonderland

In September 1999, Ella May Wulff and her husband, Barry, joined other members of The Heather Society on a trip to South Africa's Western Cape Province to search for Cape heaths. The tour was designed and led by the world authority on South African ericas, Ted Oliver, who ensured that the group saw many of the hundreds of erica species that live within 200 miles of Cape Town.

Ella May will share with us some of the insights gained during the tour, along with slides of these most unusual flowers and their habitats. Beginning with an introduction to the South African flora in Cape Town's world famous botanic garden, Kirstenbosch, Ella May will present highlights of her tour and will offer some suggestions for cultivating these beautiful heathers. The presentation will show a whole new world of heather waiting to be explored. ●

Summer Picnic Wednesday, July 17 Heritage Plantation Sandwich, MA 10 a.m.

Members are invited to Sandwich, MA on Wednesday, July 17 to admire the new heather planting at Heritage Plantation. Harry Bowen, director emeritus of NEHS and the person who spearheaded this project, will be at the site from 10 a.m. to 12 noon to answer questions.

There are many other gardens, displays and gift shops of interest on the grounds. General admission is \$12, or \$10 for seniors.

Then we'll drive from Sandwich to the Falmouth home of Vivagean Merz for a picnic from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. People should bring their own brown-bag lunch, and cold beverages will be provided by the hostess.

Directions: Heritage Plantation is located at Pine and Grove Streets, in Sandwich Village.

From the Sagamore Bridge, take the Rt. 6A exit; turn right onto Rt. 130, and take another right onto Pine Street (look for the white oval sign.)

From the Mid-Cape Highway on Rt. 6, take exit 2; go left on Rt. 130 through Sandwich, then left on Grove Street (ditto the white oval sign.)

Welcome, New Members

Albert Bosch of Groningen, Germany
Nancy Dimmick of Harpswell, ME
Robert Hughes of Sea Girt, NJ
Sally Katkaveck of Ashford, CT
Muriel Mill of Vineyard Haven, MA
Donna Picciotti of Holland, MI
The Fells of Newbury, NH
Willa Wick of Harriston, Ontario
Stephen Miller of Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, Canada

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