



## AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

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The long awaited “**Regional Heather Growing Guide**” is finally available for sale. I urge each and every member of the Northeast Heather Society to purchase this informational and entertaining publication full of unique witticisms that the author, Donald Mackay, makes with such ease. Once you read it, you’ll want to buy one for that friend who has always admired your heathers but has been hesitant to try them. The guide addresses all the unfriendly growing situations for heather that the northeastern United States offers and suggests solutions. And even if you live in an area where growing conditions are more agreeable to heather, there is still a wealth of information to be gleaned from this book.

In the fall of this year, at the NEHS Annual Membership Meeting, Binghamton, NY, I will start the final year of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, two-year consecutive terms allowed any officer of The Society. With the publishing of the **Regional Heather Growing Guide** and the “in process of design” of a Northeast Heather Society website, I feel that the Society will become more visible, will be in a better position using better tools to meet the needs and attract the younger generation of heather gardeners. I cannot begin to list those who channeled their effort or gave their input, large or small, to achieve these milestones lest I overlooked some one but it is a job well done.

The website domain name is not secured as yet but since there is no other NEHS, I am certain that it will be [www.northeastheathersociety.org](http://www.northeastheathersociety.org). There is a wealth of information that can be shared with visitors to our website like, board meeting discussions and votes, calendar of events, board member profiles, NEHS Members Only page, the Heather Notes newsletter, membership information, lots of pictures and the list goes on. A good friend with lots of experience is setting up our website for free and I will serve as the webmaster. This is going to be exciting!

### WELCOME NEW NEHS MEMBERS

- Al Barefoot - Wilmington, DE
- Eric Herron - Binghamton, NY
- Andrea Kidder - Newark, DE
- Dr. James Platis - Merrillville, IN
- Anne & Will Rowlands - Green Farms, CT

Preparations for the Annual Membership Meeting and Heather Conference in Binghamton, NY, August 26, 27, 28, are in the final stages. Note the wide range of accommodation rates on the registration sheet with the more expensive rates including breakfast, gym facilities, pool etc. Since all your meals, (2) breakfasts, (1)lunch and (2) dinners are part of the conference package I leave you to make the most practical accommodations decision. All motels/hotels are located in a 1.5 mile stretch on Upper Front St., Binghamton. The banquet room is centrally located at the Comfort Inn as is the home of the Matweys’ for Sunday brunch. There will be a gourd crafting workshop Saturday afternoon at Cutler Botanic Garden before or after you tour this horticultural gem of Binghamton. The workshop, decorating a gourd flower pot, will be given by Terry Noxel, NEHS member, American Gourd Society past president, treasurer, secretary and current advertising chair of the AGS.

Continued on page 3

## FEATURED PLANT— Tree Heath



I first saw Tree Heath at Fort Tryon, NYC 5-6 years ago and knew I wanted at least one in our garden. I loved the graceful, airy appearance of the plants. I was able to propagate six plants from a few cuttings I had taken.

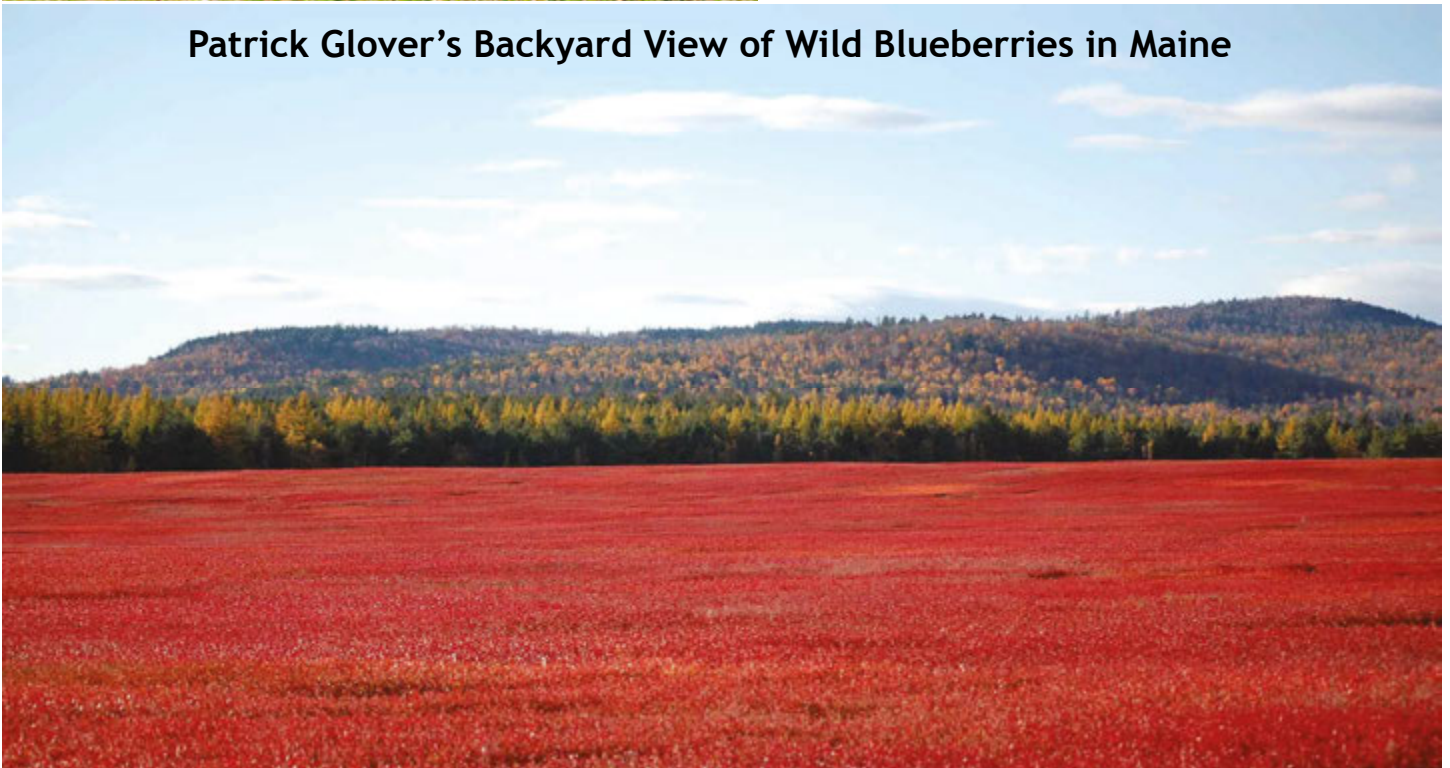
At the time, we were very busy moving from Newark, DE to Oxford, PA to start our nursery. It was two years before we had time to prepare and plant an Erica garden along side our gravel drive. During that time all but one of the Tree Heath died. I decided it was 'now or never.' I planted the last Tree Heath in the Erica garden. We weren't optimistic that ours would make it knowing that the Tree Heath in Fort Tryon had succumbed.

We were elated when the Tree Heath survived its first Pennsylvania winter unscathed. Although it never flowered, the plant had wonderful bright green new foliage. It was about two and a half feet tall and provided a nice vertical accent at the back of the Erica garden. The Tree Heath continued to thrive over the next two years. It only suffered a few brown branches from the multiple snow storms in 2009 and 2010.

In the spring of 2010 we spotted a few flowers on several lower back branches. We were thrilled. Imagine our surprise when we discovered that the Tree Heath was covered in buds in the spring of 2011. The buds started opening in late April and by early May the Tree heath had lovely white flowers, which lasted for two weeks. The plant, now four feet tall, was striking.

The Fort Tryon Tree Heath was not identified. If anyone has an idea as to the species or cultivar please get in touch with me.  
Jane Murphy

## Patrick Glover's Backyard View of Wild Blueberries in Maine



## AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Continued from page 1

We will also hold the traditional Heather Parlor Show this year as the earlier date of the conference will allow for some choice blooming heather specimens. In case you have forgotten how this show is conducted, we all bring choice sprigs of heath and/or heather in flower which will be displayed for all attendees to vote for the best looking specimen in several categories. Saturday evening festivities include the Annual Membership meeting with election of officers and the Heather Parlor Show results to be held after the social hour with open bar and catered buffet dinner at the Comfort Inn. I hope you will consider attending the Annual meeting and Heather Conference. It is always a special event when friendly people with like interests get together.

.....Mary Matwey

## HELP WANTED

After receiving and reading "A REGIONAL HEATHER GROWING GUIDE" please pass along any nursery or nursery gift shop that you think would be interested in selling copies of this guide to their customers. Often the sales people are not knowledgeable in answering questions on heather culture and to be able to offer this guide for sale to their customers would be a big plus in their favor. Send or email the nursery name, nursery address and contact person to:

Bill Dowley  
28 Hurricane Rd  
Keene, NH 03431  
or

email: [www.wdowley@ne.rr.com](http://www.wdowley@ne.rr.com)

*Thanks for your help.*

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**DON'T BE PRUNED! WE WOULD MISS YOU!**

Check the expiration date on the address page of this newsletter.

Send your renewal to Treasurer Peter Matwey, 7 Heights Court, Binghamton, NY 13905

## A Regional Heather Growing Guide

For many years, people growing heather have had difficulty getting complete, factual information on the dos and don'ts of growing heather in the northeast part of the country. Weather and soil in the Northeast and mid-Atlantic vary considerably from England and Pacific Northwest areas where heather writers have come from in the past. Several years ago, the Northeast Heather Society began compiling heather growing information from its members. This effort was spear-headed by Donald Mackay and the content of the guide also reflects the many years of Donald's heather growing experiences and his unique witticisms.

This heather growing guide, designed specifically for areas in the north and east of this continent, gives special attention to problem areas. As you move away from the coast and the moderating effects of the sea on temperature and humidity, one moves into the interior regions where heather growing is marginally more difficult and challenging, and the need for such a guide is evident. Examples of highly successful heather gardens from as far south as the Smokies to the frigid regions north of upper Ontario are given.

You don't have to live in inaccessible places to benefit from **A Regional Heather Growing Guide**. Almost surely you will find several sections in this Guide that you will think are written only for you. Sections include optimum siting of plants in the garden, soil preparation, fertilization needs, and planting techniques for both new plants, and the old ones that need a new lease on life. All are fully described.

In addition, those who live along the Pacific coast, particularly from Oregon north to British Columbia, should experience many climate similarities to that described here. In many ways the Pacific coast offers easier conditions than the Atlantic, and advice offered here should be fully applicable.

The **Regional Heather Growing Guide** contains 36 pages with 20 chapters:

Introduction	Propagating Heathers
Definition of Regional	Winter Protection
Notes on Using the Guide	Repair, Rejuvenation & Resuscitation
Siting & Sun/Shade Requirements	Plant Interactions
Soil Preparation	Stand By the Standbys
Planting	The Problem with <i>Erica x darleyensis</i>
Chalky Soils	Pests
Pruning	The Deer Control Problem
Fertilizing	Condensed Advice for a New Gardener
Spring Maintenance	Conclusion: It's Not as Bad as it Seems

There is a center section of 8 color photos and several black white photos to enhance chapter information. The document dimensions are 5½" x 8½", center stapled, using high quality paper for cover, text and photos. The **Regional Heather Growing Guide** is available for sale and immediate shipment to members of the Northeast Heather Society at a cost of \$7.95 (incl. S&H). You will find an order form for the Guide in this issue for your convenience. Cost schedule for non-US members is also included on the order form. The reward for placing an order is three fold: **1)** 100% of all monies will go to support the Northeast Heather Society, **2)** the information in the Guide will be most helpful in solving any heather cultural growing problems you may have, and **3)** if your heathers are happy this guide will serve to support your current heather growing practices and maybe give you the courage to try something a little different.

Thank You in advance for your order.



Northeast Heather Society  
 28 Hurricane Road  
 Keene, NH 03431

US ORDERS ONLY			
Qty	Description	Price/Each Incl. S&H	Total
	A Regional Heather Growing Guide	\$7.95	

NON-US ORDERS			
Qty	Description	Price/Each Incl. S&H US currency only	Total
	A Regional Heather Growing Guide	\$9.95	

Send this Order Form and Check to: Northeast Heather Society  
 Attn. W. Dowley  
 28 Hurricane Road  
 Keene, NH 03431

Ship To Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zipcode: \_\_\_\_\_

## Spring 2011, Heather Trimming

This has turned out to be a very busy and exciting year. In addition to the regularly scheduled trimming of Heathers at Fort Tryon and The Fells, Pete and I traveled to Sandwich, MA to help with trimming of the Heathers at the Heritage Museum and Gardens on April 24th. This was my first visit to this garden and I know not the last. Although it had been several years since the heathers at the Heritage Garden had been tended by the NEHS, we found the heather plants in fairly good shape. I'm sure their condition was the direct result of the attention given to them by Jeanie Gillis, Director of Horticulture at The Heritage, and her crew of garden volunteers. The trimming crew was comprised of Pete, myself and Vivagean Merz from the NEHS and 3 Heritage volunteers. We began work under cloudy skies with a slight drizzle which escalated into a little sleet followed by a driving rain. Throughout the morning we kept Jeanie busy removing the garbage cans of debris and trimmings, providing tools, rain gear and picking our brains on heather growing culture. Jeanie kept suggesting that we give it up but we three NEHS volunteers stuck it out and managed to give each and every heather some cursory attention. Vivagean had made the 1 hour trip to the garden and Pete and I, although we did stay overnite at a wonderful B & B in Sandwich, made the 5 hour trip to Heritage and we three were loath to quit. In the end however, we did cop out and let the last of the trimmings and debris for Jeanie's volunteers to cleanup. This was Heritage's Earth Day celebration and many visitors braved the rain to participate. I'm sure they wondered where we, looking like wet rats, came from as we had our lunch in the warm, dry Museum. With hugs and safe travel wishes all around we started on our drive home, never seeing sunshine until we hit NY. I feel confident in saying that the NEHS has a true friend, and supporter of the heather garden at the Heritage Museum and Garden in Jeanie Gillis. If you are ever out that way, take the time to stop and say hello to Jeanie from the NEHS. The Heritage Museum and Garden is just over the Bourne Bridge on the way to the Cape. A Binghamton Master Gardener who has a house on the Cape has promised to stop by the Heritage garden and be a volunteer at caring for the heathers or however Jeanie can use her. She will be camera ready as I hope you all will be in getting that perfect shot of heather in bloom this year for our NEHS photo library. Email me your photos at [mmatwey@stny.rr.com](mailto:mmatwey@stny.rr.com). Check out the photo on page 2 from Patrick Glover's backyard of wild lowbush Blueberries, *Vaccinium augustifolium* at Silsby Plains, Town of Aurora in ME.

### Heather Ale Spotted in Maine

If you get to Maine, especially in the Mt. Desert area, look out for MacFoochie's Scottish Ale, which the label declares is "Made with Scottish Heather Tips."

The Atlantic Brewing Company of Bar Harbor helpfully explains on the back label.

"MacFoochie's Scottish Ale is named for the Maffucci clan who emigrated to America from the highlands of Italy in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This hearty ale style is believed to have originated in Edinburgh in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Scottish ales tend to be "a wee bit heavy" and MacFoochie's is no exception. We follow the traditional style of sweetness, full body, and a low hop flavor profile. The result is a complex beer yielding robust malt richness and subtle toffee notes."

They add: "Our brewers describe this ale as "Dark as night and sweet as love, our Scottish ale has a good dose of peat smoked malt and a unique touch of heather in addition to the hops. Enough strength to keep you warm on a long winter night, this fine ale can be consumed with or after dinner."

Finally, the rather unusual MacFoochie name is explained in a footnote: "The Maffucci name was probably corrupted by the immigration official at Ellis Island in New York."

If you can believe that you can well believe in the faerie origin of Heather Ale proposed by Robert Louis Stevenson. You can also take my word that it is indeed a beer very much worth the drinking.

### More About Erica Melanthera Philadelphia Flower Show Winner

More information on the **Erica Melanthera**, 2011 blue ribbon winner at the Philadelphia International Flower Show which was the Featured Plant in HN, Vol.21, No.2

The owner of this blue ribbon winner was Diana Wister. She was happy to provide the following information on her plant. The **Erica Melanthera** is grown in her greenhouse in Coatesville, PA. Diana acquired her plant from a former gardener, Jock Christie. He gave her cuttings 40 years ago from a plant he received from Sir John Thouron of Unionville, PA.

The erica is always in bloom at Christmastime and is displayed in her home. Jock Christie told her it would bring good luck for the New Year! Jock's son, John, has followed in his father's footsteps and continues to tend Diana's greenhouses. Diana said the erica has won many a ribbon during Jock's life and continues with John's help!

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**Heather Trimming at the Heritage Museum and Gardens Sandwich, MA—April 23, 2011**



Before Trimming

Trimming Crew (left to right) Vivagean Merz, unknown volunteer, Jeanie Gillis

After Trimming

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**Heather Trimming at Fort Tryon, NYC, NY –April 9, 2011**



**Town of Dickinson, New York - Heathers**



Before cleanup and trimming



After cleanup and trimming

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**The Fells, Sunapee, New Hampshire**



Before cleanup and trimming



After cleanup and trimming

**HEATHER NOTES**, all rights reserved, is published quarterly by the Northeast Heather Society (NEHS), a tax-exempt organization and a chapter of the North American Heather Society (NAHS).

*The purpose* of the Northeast Heather Society is to foster interest in growing heathers (*Calluna, Erica, Daboecia, Cassiope, Phyllocladus* and *Andromeda*) in northeastern North America, by serving as a conduit of educational information for both the experienced and the novice gardener.

**MEMBERSHIP** in the Northeast Heather Society is open to anyone who pays dues to this chapter. Membership benefits include: a subscription to this quarterly newsletter, participation in chapter meetings and elections, borrowing privileges for slide/power point presentations, and, most valuable of all, contact with fellow heather gardeners who mostly live in or near your growing zone, all willing to share helpful advice and their experiences. A family membership permits more than one family member to vote and participate in all NEHS activities for an additional \$5 per year fee above the annual dues. The family membership includes all household members residing at the same address and each member has one vote. Each household will receive only one copy of Heather Notes.

Dues for an Individual: \$15 a year; \$28 for a two year membership; \$40 for a three year membership

Dues for a Family \$20 a year; \$33 for a two year membership; \$45 for a three year membership

Remit payment to: Peter Matwey, Treasurer, 7 Heights Court, Binghamton, NY 13905

For digital presentations, contact Bill Dowley, Keene, NH. Tel. (603) 355-8801; wdowley@ne.rr.com

**WEB INFORMATION:** North American Heather Society website: [www.northamericanheathersoc.org](http://www.northamericanheathersoc.org)

Click on 'Chapters' to find the Northeast Heather Society (NEHS) chapter page.

**ADVERTISING:** Quarter page ad: \$35 per issue; \$25 per issue if advertising in two or more consecutive issues.

Contact: Pat Hoffman (856) 467-4711; njgardener15@hotmail.com

**BE A CONTRIBUTOR TO HEATHER NOTES:**

Do you have a suggestion, a question, a story, an anecdote, a poem, or a photo to share? Contact the Content editor:

Mary Matwey, 7 Heights Court, Binghamton, NY 13905 (607) 723 1418 [mmatwey@stny.rr.com](mailto:mmatwey@stny.rr.com)

All material may be edited for clarity and length.

**DEADLINES FOR EACH ISSUE:**

March 20—June 20—September 20—December 20

