

The LoGerfo Library of the Horticultural Alliance of the Hamptons (HAH)

In 1986 two Amagansett neighbors, Bill Shank, an architectural designer, and John Whitney, a garden designer and horticulturist, spoke regularly over their common back fence. The topics they discussed revolved around horticulture and soon they realized that they both wanted to develop more connections with the East End horticultural community. Whitney came up with the idea for a not-for-profit organization which would include a library and study opportunities and before long HAH held its first meeting at St. Ann's Church in Bridgehampton. It attracted a small and dynamic group of men and women dedicated to fostering the art and science of horticulture.

The group evolved quickly as it explored various means for gathering and sharing horticultural knowledge with its growing membership and the greater public. A newsletter was started, a journal was added, and highly respected horticultural professionals were brought out to the East End to speak to an emerging audience. One of the early members, John LoGerfo, of Sag Harbor, enthusiastically pursued the possibility of developing a horticultural library. Starting with a simple yard sale and some basic plants, he began to raise funds for it. Every year thereafter, the sale expanded as did the library and the HAH membership. Everything that was accomplished was done by members volunteering their time and energy in pursuit of a common passion for plants and gardening.

Today the HAH LoGerfo Library, presently guided by HAH librarian, Susan Kennedy Zeller, is one of the largest of its kind on Long Island with well over 3,000 volumes comfortably housed at the back of the Bridgehampton Community House, off the School St. parking lot. Dedicated members recently oversaw a welcome renovation of the space which now boasts premium LED library lighting, new furnishings and a bright, fresh look. The library offers an extensive collection of reference books on every horticultural topic imaginable, arranged using the official system common to all Botanical Libraries. A listing of the entire collection is available on a link at the HAH website (hahgarden.org), where one may check by subject, title or author to see if it is in the library. One will find a wide selection of useful horticultural encyclopedias, volumes on specific plants, how-to manuals, books on historic, public or private gardens in the US and around the world, and much, much more. The collection is updated with new titles frequently both through generous donations (accepted in summer, with duplicates sold at the annual fall Yard Sale) and acquisitions. The library also has DVDs, nursery catalogues, and up-to-date subscriptions to specialty periodicals, scholarly journals and popular gardening magazines.

Browsing and reading during open hours, or by appointment, is free to the public, and HAH members may also borrow books to take home. Membership is open to all and the organization and its library are active year round for its roughly 350 members. Membership fees are kept low at \$10 for a student, \$45 for an individual and \$75 for a family/dual and some events are free, so that anyone interested in horticulture, professional or amateur, can afford to participate, learn and share knowledge with others.

The spacious library room doubles as the HAH office and is used for a busy schedule of workshops, roundtable discussions, book groups and seminars on horticultural subjects. HAH publishes a monthly newsletter, *HAHappenings*, and maintains a website at hahgarden.org which keep the public informed of HAH events and other East End gardening activities, as well as providing informative articles on current gardening topics. In addition HAH arranges local garden tours and trips to other destinations in season. In addition to its long standing, highly regarded monthly lecture series, and in keeping with its pledge to foster horticultural education, HAH offers scholarships for horticultural students, and an outreach program in conjunction with East End public libraries for introducing youngsters to planting.

Nearly 30 years later, most of the work at HAH is still done by volunteers from the membership, including producing the expansive annual May Garden Fair and Plant Sale which is its only fund raiser of the year. Held on the grounds of the Bridgehampton Museum across the street from the Community House, it features an array of favorite, new and unusual plants chosen by knowledgeable members, as well as many plants dug from members' own gardens and

many plants native to the East End. This year's 25th Annual Preview Party (\$60 at the gate per person) on Friday, May 15th, 6-8 pm, and Garden Fair (free entry) on Saturday, May 16th, 9 am - 1 pm, will once again raise funds for the HAH and its LoGerfo Library to remain a vital educational resource for the East End gardening community.

Elaine Peterson
HAH President, 2013-2015