HAH Home Growing 2020

In lieu of our cancelled lectures for spring/summer, HAH has accessed the Cornell Cooperative Extension Zoom programs. These are available if you are a member of HAH and they are scheduled every other week on Wednesdays at 10 am through the end of September. If you would like a little more detailed information on each presentation, please go to the Cooperative Extension Suffolk County website http://ccesuffolk.org/gardening/speakers-bureau. A blast email will be sent two weeks prior to each presentation announcing the event which will allow members to respond if they want to participate. The day prior to the event, participants will be notified with the link. We’ve had a very good response to this service. To date we’ve had approximately 50 members sign up for Chanticleer (April 22) and The Gardens of Downton Abbey (May 6). Any questions? Please contact Bettina Benson at hahmember@optonline.net

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The birds and the bees are back and as busy as we are in our gardens. In this issue we have asked members to tell us about their own gardens on the topics of ‘Container Gardening’ and ‘Birds in our Gardens.’ Thanks to all of you who have contributed these articles while we are in this temporary lull at HAH. The silver lining is that we have had more time to be in our own gardens!

Great Blue Heron, Little Egret and Great Egret in nature's garden, Montauk. Photo: Vicki Bustamante
Dear Friends,

Well, here we are. By the time you read this, we may be phasing back some things in our lives and economy. Or not. In the meantime, nature persists and the garden continues to call us.

Many people have commented about how this long slow spring has enabled them to focus on birdlife as well as the garden. This issue has an article from Nancy Gilbert, who with her husband has created a haven for birds and pollinators. Doug Tallamy’s lecture last fall addressed the things that we can do to support bird life, and I know that many of us are looking for ways to do that in our gardens.

June is also an ideal time to plant containers that will see us through to November. They provide a perfect way to try new things that we can see “close up.” Try something new this year!

Stay healthy,

Alicia Whitaker

HAH 2020

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The Library Chairperson (who serves on the Board with a vote) is currently: Susan Kennedy Zeller
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NEWSLETTER/WEBSITE EDITOR
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Submissions must be received by the 10th of the month prior to publication. Please include NL in the subject line.

MAILING
John Benson

PHOTOS
Bettina Benson, Vicki Bustamante, Nancy Gilbert, Pamela Harwood, Dee LaDuke, Elaine Peterson, Erika Shank

More on lovage

I Love Lovage (etcetera, etcetera, etcetera)

Elaine Peterson advises that Lovage should be lifted, divided and moved to a different spot every few years or it will go into decline (which is exactly what happened to mine) or disappear all together. Lois Sheinfeld said that the stem can be used as a straw – an herb before its time! Sarah Alford said that it is a great garnish for Bloody Mary Cocktails – and why not use it for a straw there also.

Marie DiMonte
CONTAINER PLANTS

I draw inspiration for my pots from seasonal favorites, from wanting to support wildlife like hummingbirds and bees, and from the incredible selection the Landcraft Environments catalogue offers every year. I like to explore their cutting edge annuals, exotics and specialty plants which provide color, texture and interesting foliage well into fall.

Not being fond of mixed containers, I much prefer single plantings, arranged in combination with other pots. And the choice of pot matters, but that is a whole other story…

Here are just a few of my favorite container plants:

Fuchsia ‘Gartenmeister Bonstead’, a hummingbird favorite with Phormium ‘Yellow Wave’

Eucomis “Aloha Lily Leia”

Fuchsia ‘Blue Satin’ with Coleus ‘Alabama Sunset’ and creeping impatiens

Plectranthus ‘Mona Lavender’

Nasturtium ‘Alaska Mix’, nice in salads

Anigozanthos ‘Phar Lap’ bright green blooms with incredible iridescent bluish hairs on the flowers.

Erika Shank, Amagansett
Photos: Erika Shank
SUMMER POTS, WINTER GARDENS

I learned the “Filler, Spiller, Thriller,” basics of designing pots from a transcript of a HAH workshop. Learning that along with the advice to plant in odd numbers, odd numbers being more aesthetically satisfying, a lesson I apply everywhere in my design life now, I was off and running.

Big pots demand big players. I have big pots on the corners of my pool and in my yard acting as a border. I fell in love with two big players and have not been able to let them go. In part, they are still with me because they become my mainstay winter garden.

My pool pots Thrillers are Colocasias, specifically: Elena, Illustris, Mojito and Black Beauty. I love to watch them catch a breeze and bobble their heads while I float in the pool. Make jerk chicken on the grill and the illusion of a tropical paradise is complete. Over winter, I originally kept them in pots but the population explosion forced me to store most as tubers and just pot a few for the fun.

Thrilling in big border pots are scented geraniums. I love having them in my bedroom over winter. There are mornings when I can lie in bed and their scent wafts over me. No matter the season they grow to enormous girths, though they always start from nothing. Even if I harden them off for weeks, when they move outside for summer, they completely droop. I’ve learned to cut them back immediately and in a very short time they have resumed their dominating Sumo wrestler waist line. The same routine happens in reverse when they move inside in October…it always shocks me to see how enormous they become despite their limitations indoors.

Ipomea and oxalis are fillers and spillers I use to set off the elephant ears. Sprawling geraniums are filler, spiller and thriller all-in-one. I generally partner them with tall standing, tidy plants like angelonia, ornamental millet, cordyline or papyrus. Elephant Ears and Scented Geraniums are my garden continuum; through the winter I can remember my summer.

Dee LaDuke, Remsenburg

More on Edibles - grown in pots

I treated myself to a webinar recently given by Aaron Bertelsen of Great Dixter Gardens in England where he grows many edibles in a small walled garden just outside the kitchen, a recommended location if you are a chef as well as a gardener as he is. Some of his favorites for growing in pots are greens - chard, kale and sorrel; carrots - he grows them in a tall pot to avoid carrot fly; leeks - also for growing in a tall pot and to be eaten when young and tender; peppers - they look great even if you don’t like them, and peas - that grow up, saving space. He also grows potatoes in burlap bags. He even grows courgettes - zucchini - in pots which limits the amounts he is stuck finding something to do with in the kitchen. He definitely loves growing herbs in pots and having them handy for flavoring: fennel, French tarragon, mint, chives, curly parsley and lovage are highly recommended. Fruits can also be grown in pots with red currants, blueberries and strawberries being quite amenable to the confinement and their acid soil needs carefully supplied. Figs and lemon trees are also winners in containers especially grown near a warm wall and able to be protected from cold in winter. Dwarf apples, peaches and apricots can be tried as well, especially as espalier. The various heights and shapes of these pots and plants create a garden in themselves and at the soil surface of the pots he fills in with violas to link everything together.

He reminded us that water is all important! Other suggestions were to keep a notebook and a set of small tools handy. His favorite pot material is terracotta but old metal containers can be used as well as recycled wooden crates as they will be fine for a season’s growth and are not heavy to move around. He adds a fertilizing combo of ‘blood, fish and bone’ to the soil when repotting the trees every several years.

Aaron’s new book, Grow Fruit & Vegetables in Pots: Planting Advice & Recipes is now available. Ed.
CONTAINERS and plants

I confess to being as passionate about pots as I am about the plants that go in them. It is perhaps attributable to my being trained as a potter and a weaver before I took up gardening in earnest. They are all kind of mixed up in my sense of the aesthetics of growing plants. Added to that is a basic need for adapting to high drying winds and often relentless sun at my home in Montauk. So when I choose plants to go in my outdoor pots, both the pots and the plants have to be quite sturdy and able to take overexposure to the elements. And since I try to restrain myself from growing more pots than I can manage, I grow only my most favorite plants.

Terracotta pots are easily broken but they are my favorites so I find places to tuck them in where there is a little more protection close to the walls of the house and they harmonize with the brick. I fill them with the tough herbs lavender, rosemary and thyme, and with many varieties of pelargoniums, especially the scented geraniums, all of which are wintered over in a large cold frame or slightly heated porch. These are combinations that are timeless and go back in history to many cultures. I like that feeling of connection with past gardeners and potters and keeping tradition alive.

Two other plants that I would not want to be without also have a long history of being grown in pots as well as ground. With our cold winters, however, pots have to be my choice for growing bay leaf and figs. I have found them to be quite happy in pots, so happy that they can and have gone on for years and are substantial trees now that must be moved into the garage for the winter. The pots I use though must be lighter in weight than terracotta and this is where I deviate from tradition gladly. We are now fortunate to have makers of large plastic pots that look almost exactly like terracotta and they are certainly worth seeking out at our local nurseries.

Another modern material that is being used more often is fiberglass that can actually be left outside in freezing temperatures without cracking. Several manufacturers are creating beautiful replicas of old stone planters as well as simple modern designs. They can be planted with hardy trees or perennials and left in place all year. I have one containing an elegant Japanese maple that is beautiful all year round with or without leaves, and needs practically no attention. I have started a Japanese white pine in another hoping it will do the same.

The toughest planters of all, of course, are stone or cement and I have utilized those for favorite displays of sedums and sempervivums which can be left in place all year. They seem to thrive with neglect and have no difficulty in handling the harsh weather here, but I have learned not to bring out my tender succulents from the protection of our porch, even in summer. In some other decorative cement planters I plant low growing annuals like felicia variegata and dwarf ipomea tricolor ‘Heavenly Blue’ that won’t flop over in a sudden squall.

Some pots I put in the garden where they seem to fit well amongst the perennials, or leave one empty, where it gets all the attention without competing with plants for it. And that’s one I don’t have to worry about watering!

Elaine Peterson, Montauk
Like many of you, I have a lot more time on my hands during the Coronavirus shutdown, spending all my time at my Bridgehampton home and being lucky enough to have a garden and to enjoy being a hands-on gardener. In the past, with a limited amount of time to devote to it, I had focused on putting and maintaining plants in the ground. But my increased hours enjoying the outdoors have made room for two more interests.

The first is watching the birds. Is it my imagination or do there seem to be many more and various kinds of birds in our gardens this year? Sometimes I fancy that all the rain we’ve had this winter and spring is bringing a plentiful supply of worms and grubs to the surface and more insects to eat. Or is it just that I never noticed and they were right before my eyes? It has made me wish more than ever that I had a proper camera with a zoom lens to take better photos than with my iPhone and to see them more clearly so that I may be able to better identify others.

The second new interest is tending to plants in containers. Some are spread throughout the garden with self-seeding cosmos and cleome, elsewhere with colocasia, and in the edible garden with tomatoes and tender herbs. Several are on the deck and I have decided that rather than incurring the cost and labor of new annuals each year, I am using perennials. One is a tall container with variegated ivy, which usually gets sparse during the winter cold, and then greens up again in spring with some pruning to invigorate it. However, as we had an unusually warm winter the ivy stayed full and green.

And so it happened that, at the beginning of the stay-at-home order in mid-March, while sitting in my den looking out at that ivy planter, I began to notice that a pair of Carolina Wrens were building a nest in it! One can never actually see the nest, just the birds making frequent morning and early evening trips to and from it. The soffet over the planter and the evergreen ivy make the perfect cover from predators. All during March and April they carried nest material, like pieces of old and dry hydrangea flowers. Peter and I wondered, “exactly how long is it going to take to build this nest? It seems like forever!” Or maybe this staying at home just seems like forever. Then beginning in May the Wrens began carrying worms. And to avoid detection, they scurry along the house walls behind other planters, or perch on the deck railing, as in the photo here, to check for predators before going to the nest. During mid-day they devote their time to feeding themselves, always working in pairs: one perches in the cover of a shrub to be the lookout, while the other pokes on the ground for food. I’ve read that they are monogamous and mate for many years or even life. They eat thousands of insects a year, which makes them my new best friends. Climate change is making Long Island more hospitable to them, as we are on the northern range of their habitat.

More recently, we made another bird discovery: a pair of Black-capped Chickadees had made a nest in the wooden birdhouse, made for us by HAH member Don Cirillo, that rests on the corner of our deck railing, directly across from the ivy planter! These are non-migratory birds and also mate for life. Interestingly, their diet is omniverous and includes spiders, insects, worms, seeds, berries, and even carrion. I’ve read that they nest in the holes and cavities of trees, so the birdhouse with the small hole is apparently very attractive them! It is also said that they are not afraid to get close to humans and may even eat out of your hand. Ours are much more shy.

Pamela Harwood, Bridgehampton
**Birds and Snakes**

You have heard of "the birds and the bees" but have you heard of "the birds and the snakes"? Brett DeGregorio, a wildlife biologist at the University of Arkansas, studies the interaction between birds and snakes. He spends time thinking about how snakes find bird nests and what birds can do to prevent that from happening.

In the 1920's, it was first reported that some birds search out discarded snake skins to weave into their nests. Birds have been observed pulling snake skins out from between the rocks in a rock wall. In 2006 an experiment was designed that confirmed this happens and offered insights regarding the bird's behavior.

The Great Crested Flycatcher nests in cavities of trees. Their main predator is the flying squirrel. Ratsnakes love to eat flying squirrels and thus, they love to crawl up trees looking for the cavities. If empty they like to hide out inside. From here they can locate their prey during the day using visual clues but wait until dark to prey on their nests. A flying squirrel is much less likely to go near a nest that has a snake skin woven into it or is displayed dangling outside of the tree cavity. The flying squirrel is less likely to go into that tree hole and take the snake skin away or depredate the eggs of that bird. Birds who have nests with snake skins are perceived as dominant and other birds will not mess with them. They are intimidated by the presence of the snake skin. Weaker birds are reluctant to incorporate the snake skin because they know they cannot win these fights. Thus they have plain nests.

Snake skins are collected by a variety of birds including the blue grosbeak, robin, black kite hawk and the great reed warbler. The male great reed warbler dominates a large area with many females nesting within the territory. The females look for snake skins and the more they provide the more dominant they are in the female matriarchy and more attention is received from the male that owns that territory. Having snake skins is seen as a status symbol among warblers.

There are more than 100 different species in North America that are happy to eat birds' eggs and nestlings. Birds lose 80% of their nests to predators. In such incidences the re-nesting begins immediately. When preparing to build a nest, birds have to find the right location to avoid raccoons, hawks, ratsnakes and others. Birds have to gauge who the predators are in the local area, choose a nest site that is going to minimize the risk of getting depredated by whoever is around. Thanks to Brett, with his special interest in snake and avian behaviors, we understand the role of snake skins as a status symbol in the life of some birds.

Joan DiMonda, Southampton

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**Resources for Learning More About Birds**

Here's a list of organizations that can serve as a resource if you want to learn more about birds. Many have virtual programming now and also sponsor birding walks when it’s safe to be together again. Go to their website to learn more about their resources.

- Eastern Long Island Audubon Society. [www.easternlongislandaudubonsociety.org](http://www.easternlongislandaudubonsociety.org)
- North Fork Audubon Society. [www.northforkaudubon.org](http://www.northforkaudubon.org)
- South Fork Natural History Museum. [www.sofo.org](http://www.sofo.org)
- Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. [www.birds.cornell.edu](http://www.birds.cornell.edu)
- NYC Audubon Society. [www.nycaudubon.org](http://www.nycaudubon.org)
- Bird Note. [www.birdnote.org](http://www.birdnote.org)

If you are a beginning birder, there's a free app for use on your smart phone that helps to identify birds, called Merlin Bird ID.
**Birds in our Gardens**

As you read this in late May chances are that it will feel as if spring has arrived. Hurray! April was colder than normal with more rainy days than usual but according to the statistics I have been able to track down the amount of rain has not been excessive. Despite inclement days, I’m sure you have spent as much time as possible in your gardens and found delight in the changes that appear daily. And it is at this time of year that the rate of change seems exponential. We are so fortunate to have the wonders of nature at our fingertips and outside our back doors! And there are no more beautiful natural additions to our gardens than avian visitors. They bring color, song and movement -- enhancing the landscape and sharing their romances, competitive squabbles, and nestling-rearing joys and struggles with us.

Located as we are on the Atlantic Flyway, one of the true joys of spring is watching and listening for migrating song birds, warblers and shore birds to return to nest and raise their young or just to rest and refuel before flying much further north. A major North-South thoroughfare for migrating birds, the Atlantic Flyway extends from the tropical areas of South and Central America and the Caribbean up the east coast and into the boreal forests of Canada. No mountains block the route, although many bird species do cross the Appalachians from the west to join the flyway, and there are good sources of food, water and shelter along its entire length.

Historically the spring migration started at the end of February with Red-Winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles and Robins being among the first species to wing their way north. Now these birds have become opportunistic migrators and spend all or parts of the winter here on the North Fork. And of course, there are birds that spend the winters with us and then depart when the weather turns warm. I love watching cheery little gray-suited Juncos at my feeders and elegant White-Throated Sparrows scratching in the leaf litter for over-wintering insects. The Juncos departed in March and the White Throats will soon follow.

What drives migration? It is all about food. Birds need a huge supply of insects and worms to feed their young and they time their trip to coincide with the emergence of abundant food at their nesting sites. Experts will tell you that you can stop feeding in late winter, but I find this difficult to do. This year because of the unusual chill in the air, I’m still offering suet, sunflower and Niger seed. I’ve removed the heater from the birdbath and will replace it with a dripper, but I make sure to have several birdbaths located throughout the gardens. Birds need clean feathers to fly so please remember to provide them with water.

Do you know who is nesting in your garden? As I write this in early May, I know we have a Robin nesting in the climbing hydrangea, a Cardinal in the New Dawn rose, a Red Bellied Woodpecker in a dead snag on the old locust tree, House Wrens in at least three bird houses, and a dozen or so Barn Swallows in the barn. There are cavity nesters in abundance – Chickadees, Titmice, Carolina Wrens, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers – who, like the Red Bellied, depend on finding or excavating holes in trees. Habitat loss is a problem for all of these birds, and they depend on you to leave dead branches and snags and to put up houses with the proper size entrances so they can’t be taken over by more aggressive House Sparrows or Starlings.
Migration at Winds Way started on March 20th when the resident Osprey couple both returned on the same day. Usually the male arrives first and starts carrying sticks to the nest. They are now taking turns sitting on eggs (they lay up to 4) and we expect the first hatchling May 15th. In mid-April, the Barn Swallow scouts arrived, which they do every year almost to the day. We open the barn door and the scouts fly in to inspect but they don’t stay. Now the barn door must be left open because within a week the scouts returned with a crowd. Yes, this makes for a messy barn, but they can each consume 60 mosquitoes, gnats or flying termites per hour or a whopping 850 per day. Our first House Wren arrived on April 25th but now it feels as if they are everywhere. Their wonderful bubbling song is unmistakable, and they sing it out in the open with their heads thrown back so are easy to spot. At the end of the month, we also saw a Brown Thrasher and Hermit Thrush taking baths, separately, in the largest of our bird baths.

May is peak migration season and despite weather that feels more like April, new arrivals have appeared daily. Cat Birds arrived on May 1st, Yellow Rumped Warblers on May 2nd, the first Baltimore Oriole appeared on May 3rd and was followed by an Indigo Bunting on May 5th. Today, May 6th, the sour cherry tree in the orchard was a riot of Orioles! We spotted both Baltimore and Orchard Orioles scouring the blossoms and flitting from branch to branch. The colors of their plumage will make your heart sing – the phosphorescent orange of the male Baltimore, muted yellow green for the female, and lovely mahogany for the adult male Orchard Oriole.

I wish you were here to see these lovely creatures! But if you look and listen, I know you will find them in your own gardens too. As May progresses, the warblers will arrive in force. While this can produce what bird watchers describe as Warbler Neck (strained neck muscles from looking up into the treetops) it is a condition that brings many rewards. Several days ago, I spotted a male Yellow Warbler (bright yellow with red stripes on his chest) sitting on my red flowered camellia. It just doesn’t get any better than that! And the hummingbirds should be here in the next few days too so it’s time to clean your feeders and stash a supply of nectar in the refrigerator (4 parts water to 1-part sugar boiled thoroughly).

Would you like more birds to visit your garden? Plant a wide variety of natives and their near relatives to support the worms and bugs the birds eat. Use shrubs and trees of varying heights to create both vertical and horizontal pathways, do not use insecticides or herbicides, keep cats indoors, leave some dead snags as “bird hotels,” wait until spring to clean up and even then be sure to leave leaf litter under shrubs, and don’t forget to supply water.

Wishing you happy gardening and happy bird watching!

Nancy Gilbert, Jamesport

Photos: Nancy Gilbert
The Under Appreciated Orchard Oriole

Like so many others I look forward each spring to the return of Baltimore Orioles to my yard. I usually notice their melodic whistling call before I actually gain a glimpse of one flashing down from a tree top or darting to my feeder.

So brilliantly colored that America’s first ornithologists associated it immediately with the Coat of Arms of Lord Baltimore the first Proprietor of the Province of Maryland; naming it in his honor. Their colorful presence, distinctive song and creatively woven hanging nest have long made it a favorite summer species for serious birders and casual observers alike.

But the Baltimore’s smaller cousin, the Orchard Oriole often goes unnoticed as it builds its own nest on the edge of woods, orchards and in larger shrubs that often margin gardens and house lots.

Only seven inches long they are sometimes mistaken for a warbler although they more accurately resemble a Red-eyed Vireo or a Cedar Waxwing in size. Less brilliant than the Baltimore their colors are nonetheless distinctive with the male’s dark chestnut chest contrasting with its black head and wings and its more melodic though quieter song is among the most pleasant of all spring territorial bird calls.

Look for them in early May when they often will be seen feeding along the edge of your garden or foraging through fruit trees. For several years I have had a pair nest quietly, almost secretly, in the low woods that margin a few apple trees that are planted away from my house.

Their nest is often set between 6’-15’ feet above the ground and unlike the Baltimore they build a traditional “cupped” nest (not hanging) that they weave with broad leafed grasses which make it easily identified in the fall and winter. They lay between 4-6 eggs and once the young are fledged they begin their fall migration earlier than many other species leaving here and heading south by mid-August.

Although they do not frequent feeders, just this spring I have had a pair come to hanging suet and have watched them sweep in for early insects at our bird bath. Like many less often noticed species it is easy to assume that it is unlikely that we see them here in the northeast but they nest successfully throughout New York State and in most of New England.

While the Baltimore Oriole with its larger size, brilliant orange body, and strong piercing song continues to be for many of us a certain harbinger of spring the Orchard Oriole less ostentatiously arrives at the same time and goes about the business of engaging in the nesting cycle with as much, although often unnoticed, enthusiasm as its larger cousin. Look for it where openings give way to woods and where fruit trees provide the nectar that draw the insects upon which the Orchard Oriole thrive.

Ed Johann - Third House Nature Center, Montauk

Photo: Nancy Gilbert
There is no better tree to discuss in May than flowering dogwood, *Cornus florida*, considered by many to be the best ornamental native tree, if not the most popular. Flowering dogwood ranges from southern New England south to Florida and west to Missouri and Texas and can be found right here on the east end of Long Island growing in forests and along woodland edges. Every May, I enjoy the several trees that grace the woodland edges surrounding the Sag Harbor transfer station.

One of the most planted trees in the United States, flowering dogwood is truly a four-season ornamental. Everything about it is distinctive. Leaves are dark green and glossy above and light green beneath. They dependably turn an attractive purplish red in autumn.

Who doesn’t enjoy dogwood flowers? For many of us, they signify spring, appearing at the height of the spring blooming season, when just about everything seems in bloom and pale green leaves are emerging. Dogwood flowers appear before dogwood leaves and emerge from large, turban-like buds. The true flowers are small, greenish yellow and concentrated in compact clusters. These clusters are surrounded by four showy, petal-like white bracts, which open flat and give the appearance of large, 3-4 inch, single “flowers” floating at the ends of dogwood branches. These “flowers” are responsible for dogwood’s immense popularity and the reason it is the state “flower” of Missouri and Virginia.

Dogwood’s clusters of true flowers turn into bunches of fleshy, red fruits, which abundantly garnish the tree’s brilliant autumn foliage and provide local birds and wildlife with an important food source well into late fall.

For me, dogwood’s size, shape and branching habit distinguishes it from other flowering trees. Growing 15-30 feet tall, dogwoods are low-branched small trees, usually wider than tall and often flat-topped. Branches are layered and distinctly horizontal, creating an attractive winter silhouette. Even dogwood bark is distinctive. It is dark charcoal gray and broken into square-ish blocks, resembling alligator skin.

Flowering dogwoods thrive in moist, acid, well-drained soil. They grow in full sun, but prefer the cool, partial shade of woodland edges. They make great specimen trees, planted near homes and patios, and also look good in groups and in woodland gardens. Easily moved balled and burlapped, dogwoods are best planted small and allowed to grow into their sites. They look best when given room to spread and branches allowed to sweep to the ground.

Dogwoods have little economic use, other than their ornamental value. Native Americans made medicine and dye from leaves and bark and its hard, dense wood was sometimes used for golf clubs, pegs and ladder rungs. Dogwoods get their name from the Latin word ‘Cornus,’ which was the Roman name for Cornelian cherry, a flowering dogwood relative, whose stiff branches were used as skewers known as ‘dags’ or ‘dogs.’ *Cornus* later became the name for the entire genus of 20 or more species.

Given the right conditions, dogwoods are easy to grow, but they are easily stressed by hot, dry conditions, summer droughts, poor drainage and air pollution. Surface roots are easily damaged by mowers and machinery. Stressed trees become susceptible to many diseases, the most serious of which is anthracnose. Stressed trees are also vulnerable to attacks by dogwood borers and other insects.

Dogwood anthracnose became a serious problem in the 1980’s and 1990’s, mostly in northeast United States, not the midwest and south, and caused the loss of thousands of trees. Mass production of nursery stock and overplanting made the outbreak worse. Since then, dogwood’s popularity has waned, even though its beauty and grace remain much-admired. After 20 years, the threat from anthracnose may have diminished, so perhaps it’s time to start planting dogwoods again. If you do, carefully choose the right site and make sure you water it well and keep your tree watered until well-established.

Rick Bogusch, Bridge Gardens, Bridgehampton
HAH 2020 SUNDAY MONTHLY LECTURES - 2 PM - BH Community House

All lectures are free to members, $10 for not-yet-members. Memberships start at $45. Please join us!

June 14 – Bill Cullina POSTPONED
What do you Mean I’m Not a Perennial?! Native Shrubs & Small Trees for Perennial Companionship

There are no lectures in July or August

September 13 – Lori Chips
Troughs: Gardening in the Smallest Landscape

October 18 – Judith Tankard
Gardens of the Arts & Crafts Movement

November 8 – Margery Daughtery
Battling Diseases in the Garden

December 13 – David Culp
A Bountiful Year: Six Seasons of Beauty from Brandywine Cottage

Websites of postponed speakers you can follow:

Tony Avent www.plantdelights.com  Read all about Tony and his remarkable nursery.

Lois Sheinfeld www.floragloria.com  Lois is a longtime member of HAH who gardens locally. Her site is full of information you can use to grow your own gardens (plenty of photos and no ads!)

Bill Cullina - check out his books at Amazon. He is one of the best horticulturalists in the USA and his books are terrific! No website available at the moment but there are articles about him online that you can google.

These 3 speakers are being rescheduled for 2021!