



GROW WITH US

SUMMER 2015 | VOL. 52 NO. 1

TOWER HILL
BOTANIC GARDEN

HOME OF THE WORCESTER COUNTY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

*Gardening is the art that uses flowers and plants
as paint, and the soil and sky as canvas.*

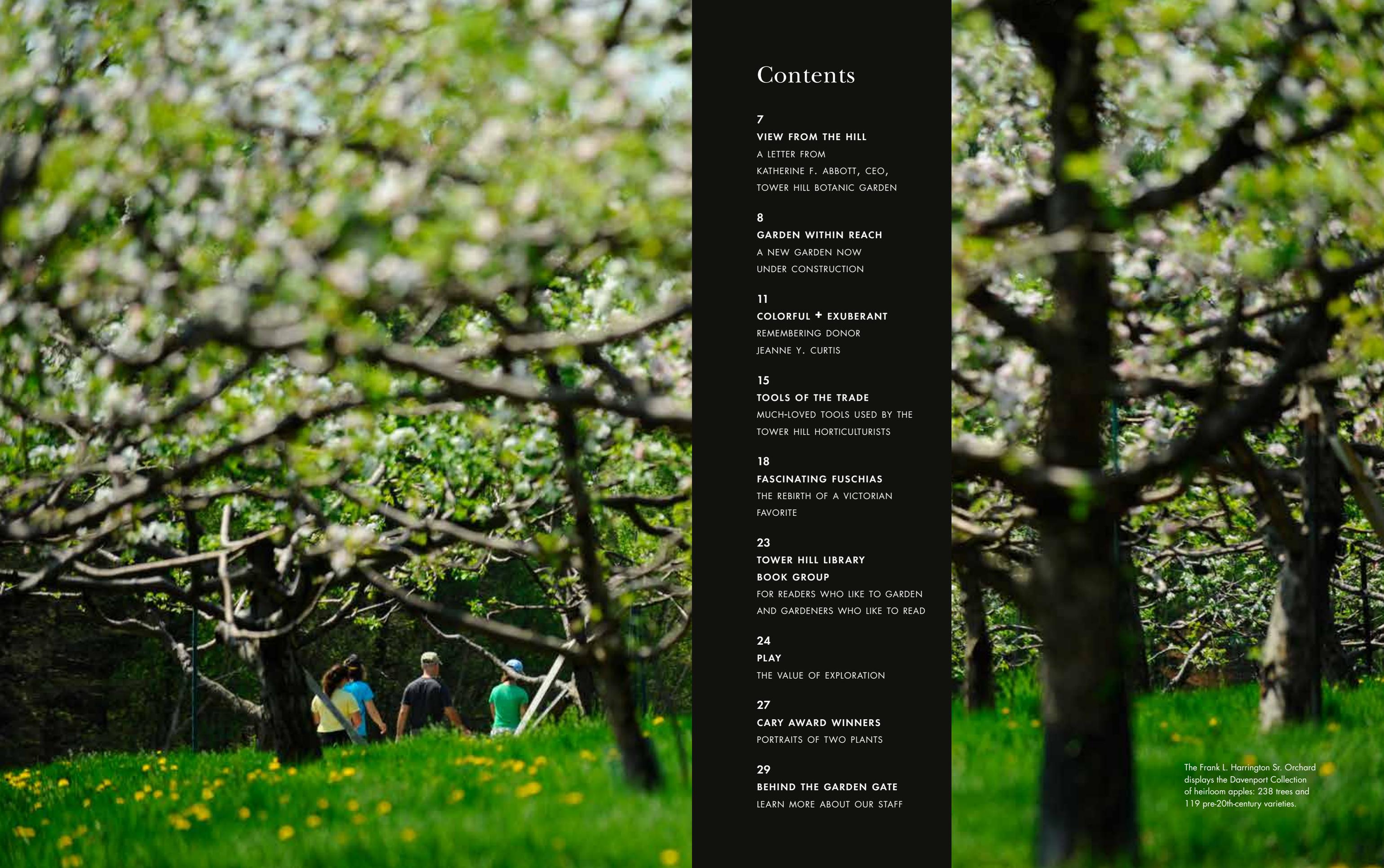
ELIZABETH MURRAY

TOWER HILL
BOTANIC GARDEN





BE INSPIRED.



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The Frank L. Harrington Sr. Orchard displays the Davenport Collection of heirloom apples: 238 trees and 119 pre-20th-century varieties.



VIEW FROM THE HILL

KATHERINE F. ABBOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
TOWER HILL BOTANIC GARDEN

Change is in the air at Tower Hill – and I don’t just mean the change of season. Director *Emeritus* John Trexler said when I first arrived here, “gardens are ephemeral,” and it’s true – gardens, like life, are constantly changing. In recent months, many of you have approached me and others on the staff to comment on the changes you’ve seen on your visits. Sometimes the remarks are about our new and increasing number of programs or about the gardens themselves. But most often, visitors talk about a change in the way the place feels, describing it as more welcoming and more alive.

We’re glad you’ve noticed! Our entire staff have been working hard to not just tend to our gardens, but to enliven them and make them more vibrant, accessible, and inspirational for all who visit. All of the staff deserve credit for this change as we each strive to make every visit the very best it can be.

Many of you have remarked on our physical changes as well as our philosophical and emotional ones. The most visible change is right at our front door, where The Court: A Garden Within Reach is under construction and scheduled to be completed by the end of summer. We are so proud of this newest garden, which embodies our belief that plants and gardening contribute to health and wellbeing for all. It sets a standard for universal design and access that we aspire to achieve throughout Tower Hill. We look forward to cutting the ribbon on The Court and launching new programs there this fall. As I already anticipate stiff knees and an aching back from gardening this summer, I for one can’t wait to take classes in the new garden and expand my use of container gardens and raised beds at home.

Even as we work to complete The Court, we are planning another new garden, this one designed specifically for children, parents, grandparents and caregivers to foster creative play and learning through plants. Studies show that mentoring is the single most important factor for engaging kids with nature and gardening. That was certainly true for me and I’ve shared with many of you the story of my own education in the natural world at the knees of my Great Aunt Kitty and my Aunt Sandy, whom I credit with starting me on my path to Tower Hill. We want to ensure that today’s children and caregivers have the same opportunities to create such wonderful shared experiences. In the coming months we will be seeking input and working with Gary Smith, a nation-

ally known garden designer, to create a fun and unique space for you and your young ones to engage with plants, and, just as importantly, with each other.

These two newest gardens are just part of how we are realizing our mission to connect people to plants to improve lives. To further advance our mission, we are initiating two planning projects this year. Through my own background as a planner, I bring an appreciation for Tower Hill’s commitment to planning and a respect for the importance of plans to involve different perspectives, investigate new ideas, challenge assumptions and inspire new designs to meet our mission goals. To that end, we will seek the input of our visitors, members and volunteers, who have helped to make Tower Hill what it is today and who are critical to building its future. We want to understand what you want and expect from Tower Hill and the Worcester County Horticultural Society, while also speaking with new visitors and looking at trends and the work of partners to help define our future programs and gardens.

We are also in the process of hiring a firm to develop a new Master Plan that builds on our 27-year history of success. The current plan, unveiled in 1988 and updated several times since, laid the foundation and developed our campus of buildings and ornamental gardens along the north-south axis of Tower Hill. It also initiated a focus on economic (agriculture) and environmental horticulture. But a lot has changed since we first crafted that plan. Back then smart-phones didn’t exist, and “nature deficit disorder” in children hadn’t been identified. Climate change was mostly a topic for scientists, the impending health crisis was yet to be understood, and the local agricultural economy was on the decline. As we confront these challenges today, it’s exciting – and necessary – to contemplate the roles that Tower Hill can play to help address them. We must build on our first 27 years to explore how to increase our positive impact on the environment and people’s health, to work with others to find the most economically and environmentally productive crops, to help Worcester County become a model Food Hub, and to use plants to improve urban development and better manage the repercussions of our changing climate.

I look forward to engaging with you in shaping Tower Hill’s future direction. Thank you for your commitment to the beautiful sanctuary we are today and to the even more impactful place we aspire to be. I hope you will visit us often this summer to admire the seeds of what you, our 7,000 members, have sown – whether for a garden stroll, an intriguing lecture, a new class, an evening concert, or good food with a great view. I look forward to seeing you in the gardens.

Happy Summer,
Kathy Abbott



FAR LEFT
The garden occupies a central location between the Limonaia and historic Farmhouse. Artist-designed panels of Corten steel, providing a structure for climbing plants, grace the east and west entries.

THE COURT: A GARDEN WITHIN REACH

KATHERINE F. ABBOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
TOWER HILL BOTANIC GARDEN

We are thrilled to report that the construction of The Court: A Garden Within Reach, an inclusive space that continues the Worcester County Horticultural Society’s long tradition of connecting people to plants, is underway. By this autumn, we will open the region’s first public garden built on the principles of Universal Design, which sets a new standard of access for all at Tower Hill.

The Court: A Garden Within Reach – which will be located at the main entrance to the gardens, between the Limonaia and the Farmhouse – was envisioned in Tower Hill’s 50-year Master Plan as The Container Court. While it will still serve urban gardeners and others who have downsized or shifted their focus to container gardening, The Court’s main purpose is to make gardening accessible for people of all abilities, particularly those of us with mobility issues. The new garden fits with Tower Hill’s goal to be a welcoming place where visitors of all ages, abilities and backgrounds can engage with plants.

Extensive scientific research correlates the benefits of gardening and spending time in nature with improved physical and mental health. The Court: A Garden Within Reach is specifically designed to offer visitors who experience limits in their abilities a more intimate connection to the smells, sights, sounds and textures of the outdoors. Plans include hanging planters that may be raised and lowered by a pulley system, a rotating planter, vertical plantings and two water features. In addition, the garden will feature a tactile planter, a planting table, raised beds with various plants

selected for their beauty, feel and fragrance, and gentle sloping walkways, as well as extensive seating.

A range of educational programming, including hands-on workshops, is being developed to utilize the garden’s unique features to support access to the joys and benefits of gardening. Programs will provide visitors the opportunity to learn about tools and techniques that they can use while gardening at home. “This beautiful and functional space can have a major impact on so many people who may have felt left out of gardening,” says Joann Vieira, Tower Hill’s Director of Horticulture.

The Court: A Garden Within Reach concept was created by the New York- and Los Angeles-based architectural firm WHY. On-site landscape architects Ryan Associates of Waltham refined the design and developed construction drawings, and are now working with Lauring Construction of Worcester to build the garden. Laura Baring-Gould, an accomplished artist from Somerville, is working with the team on important visual, textural and auditory aspects of the design.

A number of partners provided invaluable guidance in helping us learn about universal access features and designs, including the Seven Hills Foundation, Thomas McCarthy from the Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Universal Access Program, Valerie Fletcher at the Institute for Human Centered Design, Rehabilitative Resources, Inc., Lemon Brook, LLC, and the Perkins School for the Blind. These organizations are also supporting the establishment of



ABOVE
Extending the length of the garden, the raised bed allows for accessible gardening from a variety of positions. It will bloom with colorful, fragrant and textured plants and enclose a central water feature.



BELOW
Elegant seating walls surround the raised bed. Planters provide flexible options for gardening and close enjoyment for those of varying mobility.



Plan showing the curved, raised garden bed, which extends the length of the Court. The central water feature aligns with the north-south axis of the formal gardens.

programs that will allow our entire community of seniors, families and youth to get outside and get active to combat the negative effects that we know are associated with inactivity, from obesity to an increased chance of developing heart disease, diabetes, depression and anxiety.

None of this work would be possible without the support of our donors. The commitment of the Jeanne Y. Curtis Foundation, George F. and Sybil H. Fuller Foundation, Peter and Shirley Williams, Marillyn A. Zacharis, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Arthur and Martha Pappas, Philip and Gale Morgan, the Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts, The Ruth H. and Warren A. Ellsworth Foundation, Stephen and Valerie Loring, C. Jean McDonough, Sidonie Haines, George and Barbara Bernardin, the Helen Clay Frick Foundation and Barbara Morse are making our vision for The Court a reality. A very special thank you to the Courtemanche family for the bequest from Robert E. Courtemanche that funded the entire endowment portion of our Garden Within Reach campaign.

When complete, The Court: A Garden Within Reach will speak to the pride and purpose we place on gardening for all. This is a garden space for multiple generations, from toddlers to grandparents, to share outdoor experiences. It's a space where veterans, children of various abilities and older adults will be able to garden together. Above all, it's a space that encompasses gardening options at every level – a gathering place for everyone who visits Tower Hill Botanic Garden. We look forward to welcoming you to this beautiful and unique space this fall. ■



COLORFUL + EXUBERANT

A PORTRAIT OF JEANNE Y. CURTIS

Although small of stature, Jeanne Y. Curtis lived a large life. "She may have had the physique of a scrappy welterweight," recalls her son, Regan, "but she went through life like a rollicking heavyweight champ." Fittingly, when The Court: A Garden Within Reach opens this fall, one of its largest and most impactful features, the central raised garden bed, will be dedicated in Jeanne's memory. This focal point will brim with the color, texture and exuberance that characterized her life. Jeanne's children feel that the purpose of The Court: A Garden Within Reach would have resonated with their mother. Designed as a place of beauty and to provide opportunities for all people to heal and to experience the benefits of horticulture, the garden

reflects Jeanne's deep commitment to the happiness and wellbeing of others. Through their generous gift in her memory, Jeanne's children are leaving a legacy at Tower Hill fitting of a woman who embraced life for all it was worth and whose own life brought color, comfort and joy to all around her. She traveled widely, took courses in every conceivable subject and embraced the rich intellectual and cultural offerings of Worcester. At Tower Hill, Jeanne enjoyed time in the garden with her friends, lectures and classes, and the peaceful and restorative powers of the outdoors. Now, the magnificent horticultural centerpiece of this unique garden will bear Jeanne's name. And, like Jeanne, it is sure to bring joy and to enrich the lives of so many. ■

THE COURT: A GARDEN WITHIN REACH

DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF ROBERT E. COURTEMANCHE

GARDEN FEATURES

WIKIPEDIA DEFINITION: "UNIVERSAL DESIGN (OFTEN INCLUSIVE DESIGN) REFERS TO BROAD-SPECTRUM IDEAS MEANT TO PRODUCE BUILDINGS, PRODUCTS AND ENVIRONMENTS THAT ARE INHERENTLY ACCESSIBLE TO OLDER PEOPLE, PEOPLE WITHOUT DISABILITIES, AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES." IN OTHER WORDS, WE HAVE CREATED A GARDEN FOR EVERYBODY.

COURTYARD

The Garden Within Reach encloses a central courtyard comprised of accessible landscape, ample seating, primary teaching elements and gathering space for programs. The courtyard is certain to be a popular space for all manner of mission-related events and social functions.

RAISED BED

DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF JEANNE Y. CURTIS

The most prominent design element within the garden is the raised bed, which encloses a central water feature. Elegantly curved, the planting bed allows for gardening from a seated position. It is the primary horticultural feature of the garden. Stone seating walls surround the entirety of the raised bed, providing lots of seating at a variety of heights.

FOUNTAIN

A fountain will grace the courtyard just inside the entrance to the garden. This prominent sculptural element will serve as an accessible water feature for persons with varying physical abilities to touch, see and hear.

LIVING WALL

Adorning the east-facing facade of the Reception Foyer is a striking vertical wall of plants with its own drip irrigation system. Designed to demonstrate one approach to accessible gardening, this is one of the features that can be recreated at home in various sizes.

PLANTED CONTAINERS

The garden features several planted containers that have unique features. One will have a grid for planting by the sight impaired and be wheelchair accessible. Smaller planters will accommodate seated gardening and one of these will rotate. The smaller planters will be available for purchase.

DISPLAY TOOLSHED

Part of our programming of The Court will focus on the many adaptable gardening tools that are readily available for purchase. Items such as tool extenders, kneelers and wide grip handles will be featured within a permanent display case and interpreted to enhance our guest experience.

DECORATIVE HANGING BASKETS

Another teaching element in the Garden Within Reach, these decorative hanging baskets, suspended from the exterior of the Limonaia, may be raised and lowered by a pulley system to an easily workable height. This is another garden element that can be installed at home.

CENTRAL WATER FEATURE

Flowing down the middle of the raised bed will be a beautiful water feature for visual and auditory stimulation. Situated at the midpoint of Tower Hill's Central Axis, this feature occupies a prominent place within the garden.

ARTISTIC ENTRY PANEL

DEDICATED IN HONOR OF MARILLYN A. ZACHARIS

The main focal point of the entrance to the Garden Within Reach is a beautifully designed metalwork panel just inside the main gate. An integrated planting table on the interior side of the panel will provide another opportunity to garden standing up.

WESTERN SCREEN WALLS

Most visitors' first impressions of the garden will likely be formed by the cut Corten steel screens that flank the entrance. These screens will be a strong visual presence as one ascends the main stairs. They will provide vertical structure for climbing plants and vines in season and a visual attraction for lighting in winter.

EASTERN GATE

The garden is defined on the eastern side by a Corten steel gate that provides a view of the woods beyond. The gate will be flanked by a living fence. The Eastern entrance will later become integrated into the expansion of the agricultural area beyond.

GARDEN LIGHTING

Energy-efficient fixtures will be installed in the garden to enhance its beauty and provide a safe environment, as we expect that the garden will be a popular venue for evening events.

BENCHES

Two curved wooden benches in front of the Farmhouse offer a great view of the raised bed and central water feature as well as an extended view of Tower Hill's Central Axis through the Conservatories and Winter Garden to the terminus of the Systematic Garden.

MANY THANKS TO THE GARDEN WITHIN REACH COMMITTEE + ADVISORS:

Dorothy Cote, *Rehabilitative Resources, Inc.*
Paige Billings, *Rehabilitative Resources, Inc.*
David Jordan, *Seven Hills Foundation*
Kate Myshall, *Seven Hills Foundation*

Penny Dewar, *Trustee*

Michele Hanss, *Trustee*

Jim Karadimos, *Trustee*

Rick Leif, *Trustee*

Marillyn Zacharis, *Honorary Trustee*

Chris Reece, *President*

Bonnie O'Brien, *Volunteer*

Nicole Schickling, *Member*

Valerie Fletcher, *Center for Human Centered Design*

Tom McCarthy, *Universal Access Program—DCR*

Jennifer Brook, *Lemon Brook, LLC*

Skip Burck, *Richard Burck Associates, Inc.*

Thank you also to our anonymous advisors who made a big difference.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT GIVING OPPORTUNITIES AT TOWER HILL BOTANIC GARDEN, PLEASE CONTACT THADDEUS THOMPSON, DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT AT 508.869.6111 x111 OR BY EMAIL TTHOMPSON@TOWERHILLBG.ORG



Tools of the Trade

JOANN VIEIRA

DIRECTOR OF HORTICULTURE
TOWER HILL BOTANIC GARDEN

As the sun emerges above the horizon on any given morning at Tower Hill, hours before the first visitor arrives, hands clasp the handles of a pair of pruners and wordlessly, automatically, slip them into a back pocket or holster. Next comes a pruning saw, and then a set of keys is slipped into a front pocket or dangled from carabiners clipped to belt loops. A walkie-talkie provides balance on the other side of the body, and a pair of gloves tuck into the remaining rear pocket.

The day has begun.

If it's a planting day, then a soil knife, trowel, and perennial shovel will be grabbed, along with, perhaps, full-sized round-pointed shovels. Nursery spades, hoses, brass 1/4-turn shut offs, watering wands and roses might also make the cut. Rakes accompany us on many tasks, as do corn brooms, handbrooms and oversized dust pans. In the fall this early morning ritual can also include strapping on a backpack sprayer loaded with deer repellent, coyote decoys and organic fertilizers to help reduce the damage from deer.

Over the years we have tested many types of tools and garden accessories and have developed a list of favorites that have made their way to our indispensable list. Sometimes they are brand-specific and sometimes not.

Pruning tools are of chief importance to any gardener. They are used for everything from snipping seedlings to harvesting peppers to deadheading spent blossoms to, of course, pruning trees and shrubs. They can sever the tape on a package, the twine on a tree, or the tying tape on a tomato, not to mention being essential for cleaning up storm damage.

The pruners slipped into Tower Hill's horticulturist holsters each morn are more often than not Felco's. Here we find brand to be important – Felco pruners are number one for us and their Model #2 is our standard. They fit comfortably in hand, grips lightly scalloped to conform to fingers. Our thumbs learn to rest exactly on the thumb-latch, making opening and securing nearly seamless. The blades are durable and yet replaceable should a mishap occur (like deep nicks from cutting unexpected wire or an occasional broken blade tip from misuse as a pry bar), and they dismantle for thorough cleaning and sharpening. Larger and smaller sizes are geared towards the ends of the spectrum, while options for lefties and pruners with rotating handles accommodate almost anyone. A well-loved pair of Felco pruners can last a lifetime, even for professionals who tax their limits with everyday use. Though we try never to lay them on the ground (especially with an open blade), the red handle makes them easy to find when laid aside. After a decade or so of heavy daily use, we find that the red coating on the very tips

THE RIGHT TOOLS CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRUNING AS A CHORE OR PRUNING AS LOVING CARE OF YOUR GARDEN CREATIONS.

of the handles wears through. Even this is not such a big deal, since a dip can be purchased to restore them to their former bright red and comfortable condition. The majority of the Horticulture staff here are never without red handles sticking out of worn leather holsters or rear pockets.

Felco also makes sturdy and reliable loppers in a few sizes. Our favorite for most pruning is Felco #21. An overall length of 25" and weight of just under three pounds makes these loppers just right for trees and shrubs in reach from the ground. The signature red handle covers provide easy visibility, a bit of cushioning and comfortably molded finger grip. They will cleanly sever a 1½" branch, and, like their hand-pruner counterparts, they are easily dismantled and maintained, with all parts replaceable. When out in the field we try to lean them against a tree trunk or hang them over a branch to keep them visible. At a little more than \$100 a pair, these are not a tool you want to lose.

When it comes to portable pruning saws for everyday use, the Felco brand reigns again, though in this category Silky saws are also prized. Important for us is the overall size and a folding blade that locks in place in either the open or closed position. When closed, the Felco #600 fits nicely into a back pocket and is very handy for cuts up to 4" in diameter. The blades have excellent sharp teeth that really do their work on the pull stroke but are effective in both directions. Blades are a tad over 6" long and the whole saw

fully engaged is under 14" in length. With both brands, Felco and Silky, the blades are easily replaced. In spring, when the pruning is most intense, we try to have back-up blades always at the ready. I personally treasure my earlier model of this folding saw – the Felco #60, for the ease and placement of the security latch.

Pole saws and pruners allow us greater reach for small manageable cuts – larger cuts that are over head and out of our reach are best left to professional arborists, but when a small branch under 4" or 5" in diameter is in need of a nip, we will pull out our extended reach tools. We have come to depend on ARS (Always Really Sharp) for extension pruners and long-reach loppers, but are constantly mindful of the condition of all fasteners – making sure that all are tightened for the best cut and for protection against loss. These extension tools allow us to make small diameter cuts (1" and under) 4' to 10' above the ground without stepping on a ladder, saving us time and worry. A Silky pole saw gives us the added benefit of taking out larger branches: 4" to 5" in diameter with durable sharp blade and sturdy but lightweight fiberglass shaft.

During the intense pruning season of early spring and the holiday lighting display, our assortment of tripod aluminum orchard ladders (manufactured by Marchant Ladders in Washington) are constantly in use. The most frequently used are the 6' and 8' ladders, which are lightweight and

easily maneuvered into the center of low-branched trees like our 200-plus apple trees. These ladders, coupled with extension loppers and pruners, enable us to prune the majority of apple trees, though work on some of the more vigorous ones requires a less easily maneuvered ten-footer. Each ladder has two support legs to which the 3"-wide steps are attached. These legs are constructed with tabs and pads at the base, which press into the ground for stability. The third leg is a simple but sturdy pivoting pole that digs into the ground slightly to provide against slipping – a wooden insert keeps it from digging in too deeply. They are much more easily maneuvered and stabilized than any four-legged stepladder on uneven terrain. From personal experience I can tell you that these are not intended for use on smooth floors – under these circumstances all three legs are quite likely to slip and the whole ladder abruptly flatten out over the ground, leaving the unsuspecting user in an unceremonious heap.

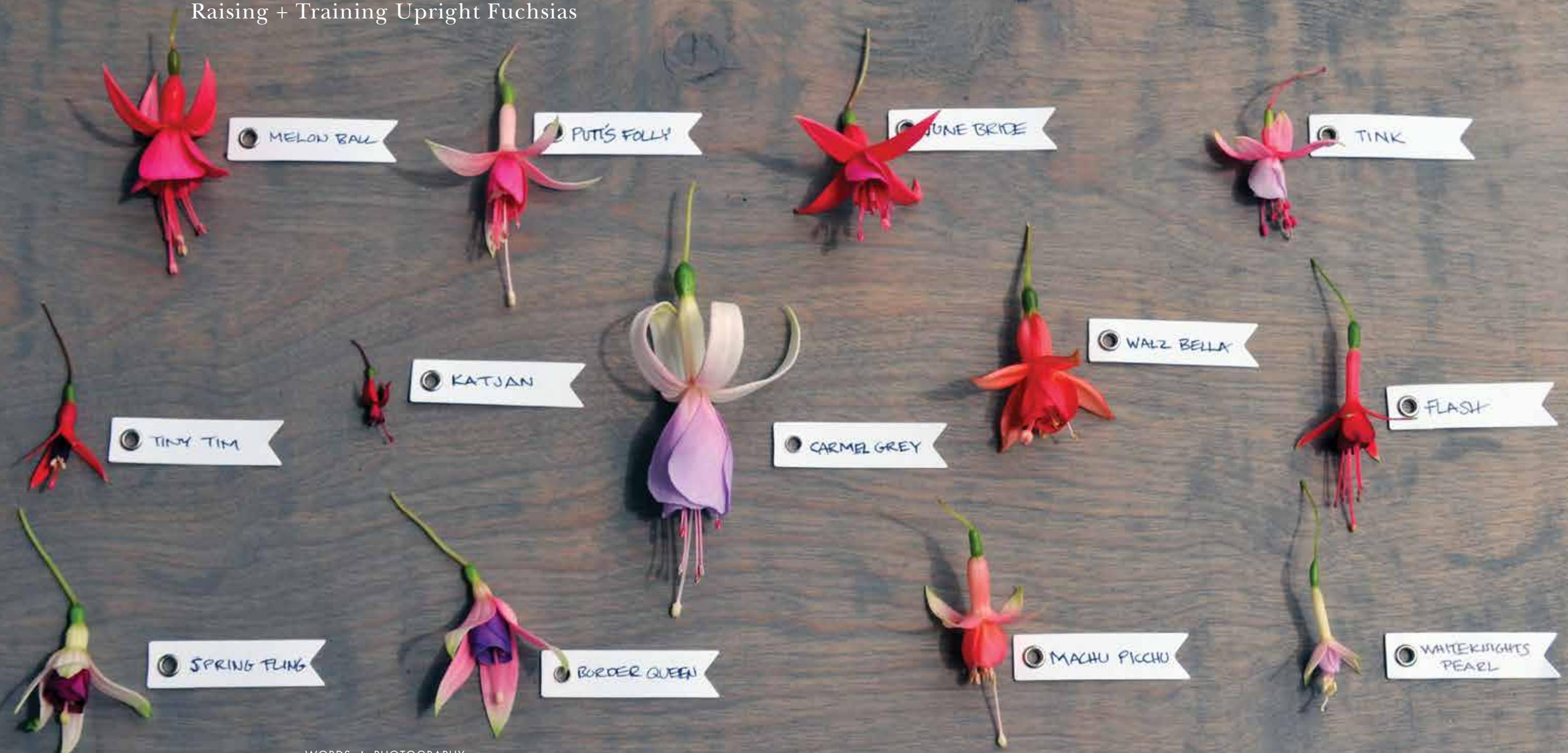
Whether your needs are simple or complex, the right tools make the difference between pruning as a chore or pruning as loving care of your garden. For us here at Tower Hill, our tools are as familiar as old friends, and we take their care as seriously as we do the trees, shrubs and plants that they help us to tend. At the end of each day, we reverse our early morning ritual, carefully pulling our pruners from our back pocket and returning them, and any other tool that aided us in our work that day, to their hook, drawer and bin – until tomorrow, when we will start our routine all over again. ■

A WIDE SELECTION OF TOOLS INCLUDING FELCO PRUNERS IS AVAILABLE AT THE SHOP AT TOWER HILL.



FASCINATING FUCHSIA

Raising + Training Upright Fuchsias



WORDS + PHOTOGRAPHY
MATT MATTUS
FUTURIST, HASBRO CORPORATION,
BLOGGER: [GROWINGWITHPLANTS.COM](http://growingwithplants.com)
& TOWER HILL BOTANIC GARDEN TRUSTEE

MOST OF US ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE GENUS *FUCHSIA*, ASSOCIATING IT WITH SUMMER HANGING BASKETS FOR SALE AT GARDEN CENTERS IN EARLY SPRING. BUT THE TRUE CHARM OF THIS FLOWERING SPECIES IS REVEALED WHEN THE PLANTS ARE GROWN AS STANDARDS – TRAINED UPRIGHT AS A SINGLE-STEMMED PLANT.

Botanically, the fuchsia is a small, sub-tropical shrub in cultivation since the late 1700s, when the plant first arrived in Europe from the Caribbean. Upright fuchsias became popular during the Victorian era, and plants trained carefully on bamboo canes in estate greenhouses were used in mixed container displays on porches, outdoor gardens and especially in enclosed conservatories.

Mixed in with other summer-blooming plants that have fallen out of fashion, such as the Tuberous Begonia, the *Gloxinia* (*Sinningia speciosa*) and *Schizanthus*, the standard fuchsia may be ready for rediscovery by those looking for an interesting, fast-growing summer specimen plant perfect for the deck or terrace. Today, these early upright forms are highly collectable and seem to have a more nuanced and gentle color palette compared to those introduced recently, which many feel are too flouncy and bold for their tastes. If you are looking for a unique plant for the terrace, patio or entryway this summer, consider the upright fuchsia.

GETTING STARTED

In spring, plant rooted cuttings in a 10- to 14-inch clay pot (you'll need the weight once your plants grow tall). Add a sturdy bamboo cane, securing the plant to the stake with a piece of raffia

or soft yarn. Train the plant to a single stem, punching out any side growth until the desired height is reached, usually around 30 to 36 inches.

Water and feed well throughout the summer with a balanced, organic fertilizer (10.10.10), as fuchsia are heavy feeders. Stop pinching the plant once it reaches the proper height, so flower buds have time to form. If you prefer a pyramid or a shrubby form (both are traditional as well), you can start pinching and training the plant at a younger size, perhaps even eliminating the cane if necessary.

By mid-summer, as your plants begin to come into bloom, it's time to start thinking about displaying the pots as a collection. Any shady, cool and breezy porch or terrace will do, or a tiered staging, created with boards painted a dark color. Pots may even set on steps, near an entrance or along the shady side of the house, but be wary of winds, as plants outdoors can topple over easily unless weighted down.

WINTER CARE

Although challenging to overwinter fuchsias in New England without a greenhouse, it is possible if you have a frost-free sunroom, a garage with a window that doesn't freeze, or even a cool, dark cellar. Indoors is more

challenging as warmer temperatures and stagnant air encourage weak growth and insect infestations. Allowing plants to go semi-dormant in a cool or cold but frost-free room is best. The reward of overwintering is that upright fuchsias can grow into sizable small shrubs with thick stems in a couple of years. Be forewarned, though, that during the winter, plants will lose their foliage and look practically dead until growth resumes in spring. Keep fuchsias barely moist throughout this period.

In early March, plants will respond to lengthening daylight and begin to come into growth. Prune back aggressively, erring on the side of a hard pruning – plants at this point can and should be trimmed back nearly to the main trunk. This will eliminate weak branches and encourage tight, strong branching and fresh growth.

Training and raising a collection of upright fuchsias is not only fun and different, it will add a refined elegance to your outdoor summer garden. Why settle for average mixed containers of plants when you can raise (in a single summer) these stunning, historic, hard-to-find classic conservatory plants, which can last for years. Besides, they are so easy to root from cuttings you will be able to share them with your friends. Good luck! ■



WHERE TO BUY

Upright fuchsias are difficult to find at garden centers – only a few nurseries carry them. Instead, try online retailers, including anniesannuals.com and fuchsias.net and several others. Young plants will grow to flowering size by mid-summer.





**GARDEN
INSPIRED**

HANDCRAFTED BOTANICAL
JEWELRY COLLECTION
BY PEG + AWL

THE SHOP AT TOWER HILL

OPEN YEAR ROUND 9AM-5PM
TUESDAY - SUNDAY & HOLIDAY MONDAYS
WEDNESDAYS UNTIL 9PM, MAY - DECEMBER

The Tower Hill Library Book Group

KATHY BELL TOWER HILL LIBRARIAN

The jury is still out on print versus digital, but the evidence is clear: reading remains a popular pastime and book groups are more numerous and varied than ever. Once a mainstay of public libraries or groups of friends or neighbors, now one can join a book group online, across the world, through newspapers, radio stations, bookstores or social media.

The Tower Hill Library Book Group began with a simple plan: read books on or about gardening and nature during the winter months. We immediately found a receptive audience and now, having just completed our fourth year, we have a wonderful combination of those who have been with us since the beginning and newcomers who add to the mix. The Book Group's members have a range of gardening skills and experience, all of which figure prominently into discussions. As for titles, we steer away from popular books and try to find titles and authors lesser known yet worthwhile, to spark discussion and broaden knowledge and enjoyment.

Walden was our first selection and now, sixteen books later, we have developed a model we think works well. We read books around a general theme and meet on Saturdays, from January through April. The weather doesn't always cooperate, but we try to finish before May when most of our members would prefer to spend their Saturdays in the garden. We always supplement topics with background resources from the Tower Hill collections and archives. To many, these supplementary materials add an important element. Participant Nancy Degon explains: "The discussions are lively and Kathy shares useful resources to enhance the readings prior to discussion. During the meeting she assembles relevant articles, maps, books, brochures and archival information (most especially interesting!) that the public rarely gets to see."

Ultimately, discussion and a sense of community are as, if not more, important than the books in most book groups, and ours is no different. Members look forward to coming together on cold afternoons to meet around the large library table to talk, listen and learn. Member Lorraine Lee perhaps sums it up best, "Our book group is a wonderful source of friendship, knowledge and discussion." ■



A STORY WITHIN THE STORY

AN INTERVIEW WITH EILEEN KRAMER
TOWER HILL + BOOK GROUP MEMBER

YOU TEACH ENGLISH AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY SO YOU MUST DO A LOT OF READING. WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO JOIN A GARDENING BOOK GROUP, AND WHAT HAS KEPT YOU ATTENDING SINCE THE BEGINNING?

I'm a Senior Lecturer teaching English to international science and engineering students. I always promote the benefits of extensive reading to my students and tell them to choose something they are interested in that may or may not be related to our course. So I am practicing what I preach by participating in a gardening book group since one of my main interests is gardening. Our discussions in the group are delightful and all the supplemental material that Kathy provides greatly enriches the experience.

HAS PARTICIPATING IN THE BOOK GROUP IN ANY WAY ENHANCED OR ENRICHED TOWER HILL FOR YOU? WHAT ABOUT OTHER ASPECTS OF YOUR LIFE AND WORK?

I love Tower Hill and the book group gives me another reason to visit this treasure of a place. It has been a pleasure meeting other members whose paths I might not have crossed if I hadn't participated in the group. Our book group also makes me feel more involved and committed to supporting Tower Hill. In addition, the book group is so well organized that it has become the model I use for book discussion and a reading group I started at school. Finally, this is a splendid book group and I encourage anyone who loves to learn more about gardens and gardening to come to a meeting and enjoy our friendly discussions on a fascinating array of topics.

WE'LL BE STARTING AGAIN IN JANUARY 2016. IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN JOINING THE TOWER HILL LIBRARY BOOK GROUP OR WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT KATHY BELL, LIBRARIAN, BY EMAIL AT KBELL@TOWERHILLBG.ORG OR PHONE AT 508.869.6111 X116.



PLAY

JOHN LEE

GENERAL MANAGER OF
ALLANDALE FARM, BROOKLINE,
AND TRUSTEE *EMERITUS*,
TOWER HILL BOTANIC GARDEN

Recently in the media, I've seen a lot written about the importance and relevance of "play." These well-considered thoughts are different from what I might consider "play-ful" thoughts. We are all familiar with that quintessentially suburban scene of young boys or girls careening around a well-tended field in their cleats, flush with their exertions and the exuberance of youth. What could possibly be amiss?

Many people would tell you that scene represents an ideal of childhood experience. I disagree. Not to dismiss the value of such organized activities, but for me, raised in the countryside of Vermont, an ideal childhood experience is one filled with unstructured exploration of woodland, field and pond. I would not describe that scene on the soccer field as play; I might instead call it "managed time outdoors." The vision of an afternoon spent wandering through woodland and field, on the other hand, evokes in me fond childhood memories of untamed imagination, discovery and the joy of freedom.

These days, many summer programs and other recreational opportunities for children tend to resemble that scene on the field more than they differ. They often involve herding children from one activity to the next by those (often high school or college age themselves) who are tasked with seeing to it that the children are all engaged in the same activity at the same time, and that no one is getting too excited. What are their charges really learning? What is anybody learning?

Play is not mindless activity, but it need not be highly organized. It should not be goal-oriented. Play is not about measurable outcomes; it's geared only to the realizable goals of the players. Play is where the players find joy in their explorations, creations and seemingly mindless meanderings.

On every farm that I have ever managed, the kids I see are mesmerized by the whirl of activity, the variety of sights, sounds, colors and smells. They are excited by the gardens and almost desperately want to go out and explore this new and unfamiliar world. They want to know the most elemental relationships in Mother Nature. So do their parents. It is the universal longing of children and adults to know, understand and be able to explicate some of the truly basic and essential experiences of their lives. For parents, it may be about understanding and connecting to the lives of their forebears (usually grandparents) who had some sort of rural experience that they would like to re-create for their own children. It is also about inculcating baseline values. For children, it is the primal urge to explore and play in an enchantingly natural (i.e., non-artificial) environment where they can see the mysteries of nature unfold before their eyes. The difference for a child between going to the zoo or aquarium and catching their own frog, tadpole or turtle in a wild pond is practically beyond compare.

A parent once told me that playing in the earth and exploring nature was not what was going to get his (then) five-year-old son into Harvard. I would humbly beg to differ. À la Russell Hoban's once well-read *How Tom Beat Captain Najork and His Hired Sportsmen*, playing in the dirt, learning about natural relationships, seeing (and not just looking), questioning (and not accepting blindly) and understanding that well-intended actions have real and sometimes awkward consequences all build ingenuity, initiative, creativity, imagination and enterprise. I believe that this type of real-world experience is exactly what will make a child a more successful Harvard student.

Over the last 20 years, I have worked to provide the learning experiences of my Vermont childhood on a farm on the Boston/Brookline line. We do not need to advertise our summer programs, because happily a significant community of parents intuitively understands that summer is when school is out, learning by osmosis is possible and unstructured learning and creative engagement is what every child (and many parents) needs and wants. Catching frogs or hunting worms, chasing butterflies or making ice cream by rolling a can down a hill may not be every child's idea of a good time, but learning by doing (or not doing) is instructive for everyone.

Tower Hill is the ideal venue for providing just this type of exploratory learning and play for children. Plans are moving forward for a long-desired children's garden in its magnificent landscape, a dedicated space designed to foster a connection to the natural world and all its wonders by speaking particularly to children and, by extension, to their parents. By creating a glorious garden landscape where children are free to truly play and let their imaginations flourish, where discovery awaits around every corner, Tower Hill can provide an antidote for the epidemic of "managed time outdoors" that is robbing our children of their sense of unbridled wonder. For those children who will have the good fortune to experience such a place of joy, I can only imagine what their vision of an ideal childhood experience will look like when they reach my ripe old age.

The discovery of the "plunking" sound of frogs in the lily pond in Tower Hill's Secret Garden is always a surprise and delight for children.

2015 Cary Award Winners

JOANN VIEIRA

DIRECTOR OF HORTICULTURE
TOWER HILL BOTANIC GARDEN

Tower Hill Botanic Garden is pleased to announce the 2015 winners of the prestigious Cary Award for distinctive plants. Since 1997, Tower Hill has combined its talents with those of the region's most highly regarded horticultural minds to select plants of outstanding beauty and endurance for this award of merit. The Cary Award is bestowed on trees, shrubs and woody vines or groundcovers that are admired not only for their great beauty, but for their sustainability and season extending characteristics. Home gardeners and landscape professionals can rely on these award winners to be hardy to at least zone 5, resistant to known pests or diseases, beautiful in more than one season, and available in fine garden centers throughout the region. The Cary Award Selection Committee, composed of representatives from each of the New England states, brings considerable expertise as designers, propagators, growers, nurserymen and women, educators, and horticulturists to the rigorous selection process. These professionals are recognized as regional experts in the world of horticulture and are uniquely qualified to recommend woody trees, shrubs and vines that the gardening public can grow with confidence. All nominations (which can come from anyone) are carefully evaluated. All aspects of the plant are considered: size, longevity, hardiness, winter aspect, sustainability, ease of cultivation, availability. Only after a thorough vetting can a plant make the list of approved plants and become a Cary Award winner.

IN 2015 THE AWARD GOES TO TWO VERY DIFFERENT PLANTS – THE UPRIGHT AND DEEPLY COLORED 'ROHAN OBELISK' EUROPEAN BEECH (*FAGUS SYLVATICA* 'ROHAN OBELISK') AND THE JAPANESE CLETHRA (*CLETHRA BARBINERVIS*).

Both of these extraordinary plants can be found in the gardens at Tower Hill. Look for the beautiful, deep maroon foliage of the six upright 'Rohan Obelisk' beech trees along the east-west axis of the Systematic Garden at Tower Hill. Upright and narrow, they flank the view to the Wildlife Refuge Pond to the east, and the stairs to Pliny's Allée to the

west. The specimens in this garden were planted in 2000 and have grown from about 12' tall to 35' or more in the past fifteen years. While they will continue to gain height, eventually reaching 50', their spread is now at about its maximum of 10' to 15' wide. These trees are hardy to zone 4, are seldom bothered by pests or disease, and increase in beauty as they mature. The richly colored leaves with undulating edges are superb spring through fall. In winter the smooth gray bark and columnar form bring a satisfying beauty to the winter landscape. Use this plant to draw the eye to a particularly inspiring point in your garden, flank and define a path or entry, or simply to provide lush color in the summer and dramatic structure in the winter. Give it full sun and a good garden soil for strongest leaf color and best performance.

The second 2015 award winner, Japanese Clethra (*Clethra barbinervis*), can be found in the Winter Garden at the heart of Tower Hill. Its position in this garden gives you a clue to one of its great seasons of beauty – winter. During this stark season the Japanese Clethra adds warm notes of copper and cinnamon to the winter landscape through its smooth, sensuous bark. Unlike our native Sweet Pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*), which forms a shrubby thicket, the Japanese Clethra forms a large shrub or small tree up to 20' tall. In summer it is clothed in rich green foliage that forms the perfect backdrop for clusters of creamy white flowers that open in July and August. These flowers, held in drooping racemes at the tips of the branches, are lightly fragrant and attractive to a variety of pollinators. In autumn the foliage turns vibrant shades of red, orange, yellow and burgundy, adding yet another season of pleasure. Hailing from Japan and Korea this exceptional shrub is hardy to zone 5 and prefers a good garden soil in full sun or partial shade. ■

VISIT THE GARDENS AT TOWER HILL TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CARY AWARD AND TO SEE THE 50+ CARY AWARD WINNERS USED IN A STUNNING LANDSCAPE SETTING.



ABOVE
European Beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Rohan Obelisk') can be found in the Systematic Garden at Tower Hill.

BELOW
Japanese Clethra (*Clethra barbinervis*) can be found in the Winter Garden.



Behind the Garden Gate

TOWER HILL BOTANIC GARDEN STAFF PROFILES



Thaddeus Thompson, Tower Hill's Director of Institutional Advancement, joined the staff in September 2014 and oversees development, membership and public relations. Thaddeus, who lives in Wayland with his wife Lucia and their two sons, Felix, 13, and Oliver, 17, grew up in a family of gardeners and enjoyed cultivating grapes and making wine with his father on the family's farm in upstate New York. Thaddeus has held development positions at Babson and Wellesley colleges and leadership positions in the development offices at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and the Cambridge School of Weston. Outside of work, Thaddeus enjoys gardening with his sons, playing tennis, and sailing. "It's an enormous privilege to be able to come here each day," Thaddeus says of his work at Tower Hill.

FAVORITE PLANT: OK, I can't pick just one! I've always loved snapdragons. As a child I liked to squeeze their "jaws" and make the blossoms "talk" in goofy voices. Still do it, in fact! I've also always had a thing for weeping beeches and the fragrance of honeysuckle.

LIKES: Secret gardens, SCUBA diving, listening to audiobooks on my commute, spontaneous adventures with my kids, eggs benedict.

DISLIKES: Cilantro, okra (unless fried – then marginally palatable), rollercoasters (except when I like them), Stephen Segal movies.



Senior Horticulturalist Dawn Davies has worked for 16 years at Tower Hill Botanic Garden, and is responsible for many of the day-to-day tasks that keep the gardens beautiful. "My grandfather owned a nursery for a while and I was brought up around gardening, plants and using the outdoors as my playground." For the last 14 years, she has designed and implemented the annual themes for the Vegetable Garden, which was featured recently in *Fine Gardening Magazine* and *Edible Boston*. Her horticulture career began at Tarnow Nursery and Garden Center in Chicopee, Massachusetts; she then trained at Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania and ran her own garden maintenance business before joining the staff at Tower Hill. Dawn enjoys working with her hands in the soil and observing the interactions of plants and other living organisms as she works.

FAVORITE PLANT: One of my favorites is Oakleaf Hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*). They have great fall color, great foliage and long-lasting flowers.

LIKES: Reading – especially science fiction.

DISLIKES: Poison ivy.



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SENIOR STAFF

Katherine F. Abbott CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
kabbott@towerhillbg.org

Kathryn Acerbo-Bachman
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS & AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT
kacerbo-bachmann@towerhillbg.org

Sharon Chauvin DIRECTOR OF FINANCE
schauvin@towerhillbg.org

Jane Ellis CHIEF FINANCIAL & OPERATING OFFICER
jellis@towerhillbg.org

Thaddeus Thompson
DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT
tthompson@towerhillbg.org

Joann Vieira DIRECTOR OF HORTICULTURE
jvieira@towerhillbg.org

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Our mission is to inspire the use and appreciation of horticulture to improve lives, enrich communities and strengthen commitment to the natural world.

GROW WITH US

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SUBMISSIONS

We invite you to submit your stories, photographs and thoughts to us:

Tower Hill Botanic Garden
P.O. Box 598

11 French Drive

Boylston, MA 01505

or email kacerbo-bachmann@towerhillbg.org

PHOTOGRAPHY

Jonathan S. McElvery FRONT & BACK COVER,
INSIDE BACK COVER, Mary Kocol 2, 17, 27, 28, 30,
Brooks Canaday 4, 30, Liz West 30, Adam
Rose 30, 32, Kate Wollensak Freeborn 6, 14,
15, 22, 23, 24, 29, Matt Mattus 18, 20,
Lea St. Germain 31, Garnick Moore
Photography 30, 31, Ashley Lucente 30,
The Imagery Studio 31.

DESIGN & EDITORIAL

Kathryn Acerbo-Bachmann EDITOR

Kate Wollensak Freeborn K.W. FREEBORN DESIGN
katefreeborn@me.com

Laurie O'Reilly O'REILLY EDITORIAL
laurieoreilly@icloud.com

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Dahlia. There are 42 species of dahlia, with hybrids commonly grown as garden plants and generally in bloom from midsummer to first frost. They range in color and size, from the giant 10-inch "dinnerplate" blooms to the 2-inch lollipop-style pompons. Tower Hill's dahlias can be found in the Youth Garden and elsewhere.

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