With Maryland and much of the world in lockdown from the coronavirus pandemic, it’s hard to know what lies ahead.

But even with almost everything canceled or postponed, there is no stopping Spring 2020. The flowers are blooming, the trees are leafing out. There is beauty to be seen and what a balm it is in these uncertain times.

We hope for health and normalcy soon. Until then, keep gardening, enjoy the outdoors—and stay safe.
A New Vice President for Membership

Sarah Atherton, a member of the Society for several years, is our new vice president for membership. Sarah, who grew up in northwest Washington, D.C., said her love of plants and gardening “probably began with a science project on hydroponic gardening” when she was in the seventh grade. She did her senior internship in the Washington National Cathedral greenhouse and has worked for other greenhouses and nurseries. She was the volunteer coordinator for the Society’s last three garden tours.

Welcome New Members!

Dorothea Abbott  Kate Carski  Nicole Haddock  Caitlyn Kelley  Christina Beneman  Rachel Fischer  Emily Hanson  Chelsea Mahaffey

January Plant Forum 2020

Left to right: A special thank you to our terrific presenters: Craig Sherman, curator of the Rawlings Conservatory’s orchid collection, for his informative talk on Pitcher Plants; Kathy Shea of Green Fields Nursery for sharing her passion for Viburnum; and Brent T. Figlestahler, head gardener at Cylburn Arboretum, for sharing new ideas and insights for creating bulb lawns.

Home & Garden Show Award

A collaboration by International Landscaping & Design and the American Landscape Institute won the Society’s “Best Use of Plants” award at the Spring 2020 Maryland Home and Garden Show. Among the plants used were *Lysimachia lanceolata* var. *purpurea*, Lanceleaf Loosestrife; *Carex plantaginea*, Seersucker Sedge; *Sedum ternatum* ‘Larinem Park,’ Three-leaved Stonecrop; and *Sedum rupestre* ‘Angelina,’ Stonecrop.

Cover Photo: Paula A. Simon, featuring *Cercis canadensis*, Red Bud Tree

Photos: Robin V. Willner

Photos: Peter Bieneman

For more information, visit mdhorticulture.org
Aesthetic conical dense habit of ‘Fairmount’. For those with limited space, dwarf varieties are available such as ‘Gnome,’ ‘Troll’ or ‘Mariken.’

Despite our constant attempts at manipulation, Ginkgoes are survivors. They appear to be free of pests and tolerant of air pollution. Ginkgo once loomed large in the prehistoric landscape of North America, but glaciation wiped out all in the Ginkgoaceae family except the Ginkgo biloba, which was preserved in the temperate unglaciated forests of eastern Asia. The Ginkgo biloba, the sole remaining genus and species, even survived nuclear blasts in Hiroshima. Trade eventually returned the Ginkgo to the West and in the 18th century became a fashionable plant with the stateside gardening elite, including those who helped curate the tree collections at the Tyson family home, now Cylburn Arboretum.

Ironically, part of the Ginkgo’s resiliency can be attributed to its horticulturally unique mating ritual. The Ginkgo, along with cycads, ferns and mosses, relies on sperm to fertilize the eggs within their seeds. In addition to this ancient form of reproduction, Ginkgo trees have been known to change sex. Ginkgo are typically dioecious trees, meaning that they have male and female reproductive structures occurring on separate trees. However, for yet unknown reasons Ginkgo have been developing branches of the opposite sex for a complex and culturally sensitive gender reveal. This unique dabbling as a monoecious tree catches us a little off guard. Not only are we shocked to find fruit where there was none before, but our culturally defined categories no longer fit our tree.

Considering the evolutionary history of the Ginkgo reveals a great deal about ourselves. On one hand, the Ginkgo is a tree with a solid, literally fossil, record of unflinching identity. On the other hand, the Ginkgo represents an unknowable future for us to ponder. As we turn to our surroundings for stability in a turbulent world, consider planting a Ginkgo as a symbol of stability and conversely a reminder to contemplate what is beyond our immediate understanding. After all, what are gardens for?
Traveling to the United Kingdom many times over the years and avidly visiting its gardens, both grand estates and small allotments, I always return home with a renewed appreciation for the verve and passion for gardening that is encountered only in the UK. Gardening is an obsession with the Brits and since I share that obsession, I can relate to the culture and the importance that they place on this “hobby.”

Not only is gardening a great practical pastime, but an entire nation engages in the leisure activity of visiting gardens enrolled in the National Garden Scheme. Begun with the aim of “opening gardens of quality, character and interest to the public for charity,” the National Garden Scheme has raised more than 50 million pounds since it began in 1927, and more than a half-million visits occur each year in more than 3,700 gardens open to the public. Garden visiting on that scale is unheard of in the rest of the world, even here in the much larger United States.

Why does Britain have this obsession? Probably climate plays a large role. The closest comparison of UK weather to U.S. weather would be in the Pacific Northwest. If you have ever traveled to that area of the country, you will see extraordinary gardens and plants that you can only dream about growing elsewhere in the United States. The hardiness zones determine your frost-free days to

In the Cotswolds, an ancient Cedar of Lebanon tree continues to grace Hidcote’s traditional double herbaceous borders.

Claire enjoying a cascade of Wisteria at Powis Castle in Wales.

A showy Laburnum arch leads visitors on the Paddock Walk to a wildflower meadow garden in Oxfordshire’s Broughton Grange.

garden and the Pacific Northwest is a temperate zone 8 and zone 9. For comparison here in Maryland, we are a 6b or 7, which means that we get more extremes in weather. Plants don’t like extremes; more moderate temperatures encourage a wider range of different plants to grow with less effort. The hardiness zones in the UK run the gamut of
zone 6 in the Scottish Highlands, to England with the majority in zones 8 and 9. I envy them!

So, mild climate, regular rainfall and a very long growing season: It is no surprise that England has fantastic gardens. When I take visitors to gardens there, they are often surprised when they see flowers that are blooming together, like a Lenten Rose (*Helleborus orientalis*) and a tea rose side by side. At home this would not be possible, especially in our unforgiving mid-Atlantic climate. Or you will see palm trees and other tropicals that stay outside all year. Tree Echium (*Echium pininana*), a native of Spain’s Canary Islands, is a plant that can naturalize in southern gardens like Hidcote, East Ruston, Great Dixter and Sissinghurst are trying all kinds of new ideas such as integrating wildflowers and meadows into their formal gardens and borders, an acknowledgement that attracting pollinators is as important as beauty. Beneficial insects are “in” in the UK and you see evidence of their importance everywhere. It could be native bee houses tacked up everywhere, native grasses overtaking tombstones in a graveyard, or lawns converted to native plantings and meadows. Stumperies, naturalistic plantings and a passion for North American plants are seen in almost every major garden.

Flower shows celebrate the pinnacle of gardening achievement and draw hordes of visitors to Chelsea or Hampton Court to admire perfect examples of pretty much every type of growing thing. Leading tour groups of like-minded gardeners to the UK (but not this year, alas) has become a ritual as I like to immerse myself in the enthusiasm and passion that the British have for such a rewarding hobby. I find that American gardeners can be just as passionate about gardening and am always gratified when I travel with colleagues who are as excited as I am about English gardens.

Most years, Claire Jones, a garden designer and writer, leads tours of gardens overseas co-sponsored by the Society and the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland. Follow her blog on the “ups and downs of the gardening world” at TheGardenDiaries.

Photos: Claire Jones

Tree Echium (*Echium pininana*) also known as Giant Viper’s-bugloss

Horticultural expertise and creativity meet at England’s fantastic flower shows. Above is a view of the David Harber and Savills Garden at the 2018 Chelsea show.
A s of today, we’re still in business. The governor has exempted the landscape industry from an imposed shutdown, so for now, spring cleanup, spring plantings and lawn care can continue as long as supplies last. Know that your landscape contractors are attempting to maintain healthy social distancing when possible. You may want to limit communications to phone and email while we attempt to navigate this new normal. We are fully aware that this status could change.

On a more pleasant note, what a joy to see our gardens coming back to life. If you are lucky enough to have Edgeworthia chrysantha, Paperbush, you have been treated to a wonderfully fragrant few weeks.

**Spring Flowering Bulbs and Ephemerals**

Now is the perfect time to plan for the spring-flowering bulbs you’ll want to plant in October. Walk around your property. Put some brightly painted small stakes in the ground where you think you’d like to see flowers next year. Color code the stakes so you’ll remember what you had in mind. For instance, use yellow for Daffodils, white for Snow Drops, and blue for Chionodoxa.

There are Daffodils that bloom at various times during the season. Go to brecks.com, just one of the many excellent sites for ordering bulbs. There you can select Daffodils, and then narrow your search by color, height, bloom time, etc. I like to spread my selections over early, mid and late spring. When grouping your bulbs, I recommend keeping the bloom time the same within a group. Group your Daffodils with a minimum of seven bulbs per group, and space them 3 to 6 inches apart to allow room for expansion. The flowers will fade long before the foliage, yet you want the foliage to remain until it turns yellow so that the maximum amount of energy goes back into the bulb for next year. You have no time to police aging foliage? Simply place your Daffodils where other plants will grow later in the season to hide the leaves.

**Galanthus nivalis, Snow Drops**

There are quite a few Galanthus sp. available, but this is the typical plant that is readily available. At about 6 to 8 inches tall this cute white flower usually appears in late February/early March.

**Chionodoxa forbesii, Early Snow Glories**

These petite blue flowers always make me smile as I pass on my morning walk. They have no trouble moving about and eventually filling up a space. At only 4 to 5 inches tall, somehow they manage to show up even in the woods, above a blanket of leaves. They can easily be tolerated in the middle of lawn areas, since the flowers are almost always finished before the lawnmowers need to arrive.

**Leucojum aestivum, Summer Snowflakes**

The foliage for this Leucojum appears at the same time as the Daffodils, but the delicate, white, bell flowers usually wait until most of the Daffodils are finished before they appear.

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*Photos: All WikiCommons; above, Geolina163; right top, HZell; right middle, MagnusHagdorn; right bottom, HZell*
Outlined below is a schedule that we developed for the perennials we grow. We have detailed when and to what degree each of our perennials is cut back.

This list is limited to the plants we grow and is by no means complete. Modification of this schedule will result from your own experience along with unusual weather conditions.


**Early May**

**Digitalis purpurea**, Foxglove: Deadhead when three-fourths of the flowering spike is finished. Then cut back to basal foliage.

**Nepeta sibirica** ‘Souvenir d’Andre Chaudron,’ Nepeta: Cut in half.

**Phlox paniculata**, Garden Phlox: Cut in half.

**Phlox carolina** ‘Miss Lingard’: Cut in half.

**Physostegia virginiana**, Obedient Plant: Cut in half.

**Hylotelephium herbstfreude** ‘Autumn Joy,’ Stonecrop: Pinch back one-third to control height.

**Hylotelephium** ‘Matrona’: Pinch back one-third to control height.

**May**

**Digitalis purpurea**, Foxglove: Deadhead when three-fourths of the flowering spike is finished. Then cut back to basal foliage.

**Echinacea purpurea**, Purple Coneflower: Prune-cut foreground back about half.

**Eupatorium maculatum** ‘Gateway,’ Joe Pye Weed: Cut in half when two feet tall.

**Filipendula rubra** ‘Venusta,’ Queen of the Prairie: When foliage declines, cut back to ground.

**Geraniums**: Except for **G. macrorrhizum**, Bigroot Geranium, and **G. x cantabrigiense** ‘Biokovo,’ Hardy Geranium: Shear to basal foliage after bloom finishes.

**Heliopsis helianthoides** ‘Summer Sun,’ Oxeye Sunflower: Cut in half.

**Leucanthemum x superbum** ‘Becky,’ Shasta Daisy: Cut in half in irregular sequence in May.

**Penstemon digitalis** ‘Husker Red’: Cut back old stems, when finished flowering, to basal foliage.

**Trollius europaeus**, Globe Flower: Cut back to basal foliage and feed.

**Veronica**, Speedwell: Shear back after flowering.

**Early June**

**Aconitum carmichaelii**, Monkshood: Cut in half.

**Boltonia asteroides**, False Aster: Cut back one-third.

**Chrysanthemum** ‘Hillside Sheffield Pink’: Shear in half.

**Salvia yangii**, Russian Sage: Cut in half when one foot tall.

**Solidago**, Goldenrod: Cut in half.

**Trollius europaeus**, Globe Flower: Cut back to basal foliage and feed.

**Veronica**, Speedwell: Shear back after flowering.

**June**

**Baptisia australis**, False Indigo: Cut back one third after flowering.

**Geum coccineum**, Avens: Cut back to basal foliage when finished flowering.

**Penstemon digitalis** ‘Husker Red’: Cut back old stems, when finished flowering, to basal foliage.

**Salvia x sylvestris** ‘May Night,’ Wood Sage: Shear to basal foliage after initial bloom.

**Valerian officinalis**: Valerian: Cut back to ground after flowering.

**Vernonia noveboracensis**, New York Ironweed: Cut back by 2 feet. Dead-head to reduce seeding.

**Mid-June**

**Asters**: Cut in half.


**July**

**Achillea filipendulina** ‘Coronation Gold’: Cut back to basal foliage after bloom.

**Achillea millefolium** ‘Moonshine’: Cut back to basal foliage after bloom.

**Echinops ritro**, Small Globe Thistle: After flowering cut back to basal foliage.

*Editor’s note: This article first appeared in a 2002 issue of the Society newsletter, not yet known as The Hort Report. Jean and Sidney Silber maintained a spectacular garden in Baltimore County for many years. When Jean Silber closed the garden in 2015, after her husband’s death, many of its plants were sold for the benefit of the Horticultural Society of Maryland.*
The Society’s 2020 Sidney Silber Scholarship winner was Alex Wiitala, a student in the American Landscape Institute program.

The Silber honor, named in memory of one of the Society’s staunchest supporters, pays the entrance fee to the annual Winter Seminar co-sponsored by the Society and the Perennial Plant Association.

Alex, who is from Forest Hill in Harford County, earned a degree in history, then worked at Best Buy. After some time working in retail, “I realized I really wanted a big change,” she said in a brief interview the day of the seminar. “I saved up a lot of money and traveled the United States” in 2018. When she returned to Maryland, she began looking at career options. She had a strong interest in plants and in the outdoors. She heard about ALI and signed up, taking courses in the Sustainable Horticulture program at the Community College of Baltimore County. She was to graduate with a certificate in horticulture at the end of May.

She also worked at Hampton National Historic Site, a job that ended just before the seminar. The following week, Alix started a new job at Lauren’s Garden Service and Native Plant Nursery in Howard County. Her goals include working with native plants and pollinators and designing gardens.

“I have a fierce determination to learn all I can about each type of plants, whether it be trees, shrubs, perennials or annuals,” Alix wrote in her application for the Silber honor. “… I love the drastic differences between all the plants that fit into the perennial category. Some of my favorites are grasses, ferns and flowering pollinators.”