

# YADDO GARDEN ASSOCIATION POTPOURRI

Spring 2020

Editor: Joanne McFadden

## **A Season Away from the Gardens**

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a year of cancellations, and the Yaddo Gardens were not immune, even given the outside nature of our work. The Corporation of Yaddo board co-chairs explained their decision to close the artists' retreat and gardens through the remainder of the year in a statement posted on Yaddo's website. They write, "For Yaddo to reopen there needs to be a global all clear—we don't have the ability to set up a monitoring system to ensure no one enters our community from an area that still has active cases. Epidemiologists agree that the apex of this pandemic will occur in rolling waves around the world and may well return in the fall after a dormant period."

At the time of publication, Yaddo has declined to allow any volunteers into the gardens. Fortunately, The Corporation of Yaddo Facilities Manager, Shane Cassidy, has been tending to the gardens in our stead, and we're grateful for his efforts. He provided this update via email:

"All the beds are raked and untied. The grass has been mowed. All the leaking hose bibs have been repaired or replaced. And the sprinkler system had a leak that was repaired. The next steps are statue covers are coming down. The repair next to the large fountain completed and koi pond prepped and ready for koi. All hopefully to be completed in the next week to 10 days (weather permitting). We are also planning to paint and repair any rotted wood on the sheds. This may be a work in progress however."

There was a report at the March 2020 board meeting of damage in the gardens from considerable debris from falling trees and branches in the February ice storm. Cheryl Martin, who has since been furloughed, relayed that Shane would be completely responsible for structure inspection and

clean-up as Yaddo was concerned about safety issues.

The gardeners remain ready to take up their work at Yaddo next season. In the meantime, I asked Barb Hefter if she would give us some gardening tips for working in our gardens at home (see the "Happy Spring Home Gardening" article on the following page).

Docents are using this closure time to see if they can give global pandemic a Yaddo context. Docent Co-Chair Lesley Leduc reported, "Some of us are doing a little extra research for info to add to our tours, and at least one person is trying to determine if Katrina wrote anything about the 1918 flu pandemic." Lesley referenced the book, *Yaddo*, which Katrina Trask penned in the winter of 1917-1918. The book was published in 1923 after her death. Lesley plans to take a look at the book to determine if Katrina wrote anything about the pandemic.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

The annual meeting of the Yaddo Garden Association will be held on Thursday, November 12, 2020, so mark your calendars and plan to attend and catch up with your Yaddo friends.



Waiting for us in 2021!

# YADDO GARDEN ASSOCIATION

## POTPOURRI

Spring 2020

Editor: Joanne McFadden

### Happy Spring Home Gardening (without Yaddo)...

by Horticulture Volunteer and Yaddo Grounds Liaison Barbara Hefter

In May, my thoughts go to working outside, digging in the dirt and marveling at how everything comes to life at this time of year. This Spring without our volunteering at Yaddo will be so different as we will not be there to reacquaint with friends and begin cleaning up the gardens from the winter. Our beloved Yaddo gardens are resilient (as are we), and the roses and perennials will survive with groundskeeper Shane's care. So, let's have positive thoughts, be kind to ourselves and this spring, and give extra tender loving care to our gardens at home.

As we do at the Yaddo gardens, one of the first jobs is to rake out leaves, twigs, and winter debris from our flower beds. We might want to take a garden cultivator and very gently loosen up soil between perennial plants. It is always exciting for me to see favorite plants sprouting in my gardens.

Spring maintenance for roses includes removing any twine that was used to secure rose canes throughout the winter. Using sharp pruners, trim away dead canes, cutting at an angle. Keep the canes similar in length so bushes do not become "leggy" as they grow. Also, pull back any protective mounded soil from the base of the rose bush. Epsom salts, available at grocery stores and some dollar stores, is a good soil amendment to use to strengthen canes. Sprinkle it around the base of rose plants at the beginning of the season, and gently rake it into the soil.

Regular fertilizing is beneficial to all plants. Rose Tone is a wonderful fertilizer for rose bushes and is sprinkled around the perimeter of a rose bush and gently raked into the soil.

Fertilizing once a month during May, June and July is recommended. Rose Tone fertilizer is readily available at garden centers, most big box stores, and some hardware stores.

Wildlife nibbling may be a problem in our gardens. There are several deterrent products available that discourage bunnies, woodchucks and deer from nibbling or chomping on our plants. Products such as Plantskydd, Bobbex, Deer Be Gone, Shake Away and Liquid Fence are available at the places named above.

Deadheading will promote the formation of new buds on rose bushes. Once a blossom is spent, look down the rose stem to where there is a junction of five leaves and cut the spent blossom off, just above the five leaves. It is also important to watch for black spot disease and beetles on rose bushes. If black spot is discovered on leaves, remove the affected leaves and discard (not in a compost pile). It is best to remove beetles by hand and destroy them. In early fall, stop deadheading to encourage rose bushes to start preparing themselves to go dormant for the winter and stop producing new buds.

Water is essential for all plants. Watering the soil around plants is ideal, to keep foliage dry and free from mold and disease. It is preferable to water plants in the morning or early afternoon. Most plants (especially roses) need plenty of sunshine, six to eight hours being ideal.

With proper Spring gardening tasks done, dutiful Summer maintenance, proper fertilizing, adequate sunshine, plenty of water, and lots of tender loving care, may we all enjoy beautiful home gardens this summer. And, hopefully, we'll return to our beloved Yaddo Gardens next season.

# YADDO GARDEN ASSOCIATION POTPOURRI

Spring 2020

Editor: Joanne McFadden

## A Historic Perspective on Pandemic

Before I knew of the docents' research into Katrina Trask and the Spanish flu pandemic that took place during her lifetime, I sought to find this information for myself.

The New York Public Library in New York City houses Yaddo's archives. Unfortunately, none of the digital offerings relate to the pandemic.

What I can offer is a brief historical context of what Katrina might have seen in the news about what was going on in our area.

The origin of the Spanish flu remains a subject of disagreement among experts. It was named the "Spanish flu" because the king of Spain was infected. Spain was not at war, so the press reported liberally about the illness. U.S. and European newspapers were under censorship to keep wartime morale up.

One expert cites the report of an unusual illness spreading in Haskell County, Kansas in January 1918. The county sits on a major migratory bird route for various species and was also an area where farmers raised hogs. If viruses carried by these animals crossed, it could have created a lethal virus. Soldiers from the country spread the virus when they reported to other World War I training camps around the U.S.

Some say that the flu arrived in New York City via foreign ships in late summer 1918, while others believe it originated in France in 1916 or China and Vietnam the following year.

Regardless of where it started, the Spanish flu claimed 670,000 American lives and between 50 million and 100 million worldwide.

The first news of the flu in the Capital Region were on September 23 in Schenectady,

when the Gazette reported 50 cases of "grippe" at a military warehouse in Rotterdam Junction. By this time, Katrina was living in the West House, after closing Yaddo in 1916 to preserve funds for the artists' retreat. (During the winter, it took one ton of anthracite per day to heat the mansion. This was \$153.00 per month, which equals \$3,910.20 in today's dollars.) She had reconstructed the "little old farmhouse" that had originally been the caretaker's home and moved there.

The flu spread quickly through the region, including Saratoga County. On September 26, the Saratogian reported five deaths in the county, and three more were reported on the 30th. City schools closed at the beginning of October. By mid-month, 700 Capital Region residents had died of the virus. Schenectady County was the hardest hit, with 311 deaths from flu or pneumonia.

Fear ran rampant during the three waves of the pandemic, the last of which occurred in January 1919. "We were actually almost afraid to breathe...You were afraid even to go out...The fear was so great people were actually afraid to leave their homes...afraid to talk to one another," remembered Dan Tonkel of Goldsboro, North Carolina.

William Sarlo of Washington, D.C. reported that the pandemic kept people apart. "You had no school life, you had no church, life, you had nothing...It completely destroyed all family and community life...The terrifying aspect was when each day dawned you didn't know whether you would be there when the sun set that day." (These remembrances are from the November 2017 issue of "Smithsonian" magazine, in the article "Journal of the Plague Year" by John M. Barry.)

By mid-November, cities had reopened.

# YADDO GARDEN ASSOCIATION POTPOURRI

Spring 2020

Editor: Joanne McFadden

## Highlights from the Annual Meeting (excerpted from the meeting minutes)

Yaddo Garden Association volunteers gathered on September 12, 2019 for the annual meeting. Here are some highlights:

Twenty-one active docents, including five new ones, led 29 general drop-in tours from June 15 through September 1 which brought about 385 visitors. Ghost tours from September 13 through October 27 (including a full moon on Friday, 9/13) brought an additional 375 visitors. Docents also participated in the Gay Pride Festival on June 16 and the Soroptimist Secret Garden Tour on July 7.

Forty-three active garden volunteers put in 3,054.5 hours of work from September 2018 through October 2019 in the following categories:

- YGA gardening volunteers: 2,691.50 hours
- BOCES students: 241.75 hours
- Saratoga Springs High School seniors: 121 hours
- These total volunteer hours represent a 13% increase from the 2,336 volunteer hours in 2018.

Members approved board of directors nominees Gay Gamage, Linda Hoyt, Cosette Lotz, Joanne McFadden, and Donna Bates. Officers were instated as follows: Mary Curtis, President; Donna Bates, Vice President; and Kathy Mattes, Treasurer.

The evening's keynote speaker was Rumara Jewett who presented a program on The Katrina Trask Gateway in Congress Park. After giving an

overview of the Trasks and their Yaddo home, she told many interesting stories behind the renovation of the Gateway. A slide show of beautiful pictures (many historical) enhanced her talk. She incorporated readings of Katrina and George Foster Peabody, portrayed by YGA volunteers Gay Gamage and Michael Coleman. The depth of Rumara's research was impressive. Rumara introduced Debbie LaBreche, P.E., Asst. City Engineer who oversaw the engineering of the renovation.

\*\*\*\*\*



# YADDO GARDEN ASSOCIATION POTPOURRI

Spring 2020

Editor: Joanne McFadden

The following piece by Joanne McFadden appeared in the March 2020 issue of "Science of Mind" magazine, on the entry for March 7:

## *Open to Change*

I volunteer in the historic gardens of Yaddo, an artists' retreat in Saratoga Springs, New York. I do it to honor my mother who sought refuge there from her stepmother's abuse when she was a girl. As I am weeding, raking, and pruning, I feel spiritually connected to my mother, imagining the beautiful rose garden solacing her.

The garden's tree roses are annuals, as they cannot survive our upstate winters. Attempts to winter them in past years proved largely unsuccessful, so the association invites volunteers to dig them up and take them home to trying wintering them.

I was delighted to have a piece of this place so special to my mother. As I labored to dig up the trees, I was astounded by how deep and far-reaching the roots had become in only five months. I realized that people can sometimes be like that. They plant deep roots in the way they think and are reluctant to give up those thoughts, even if keeping them becomes unhealthy. There may be a fear of starting over. They may not know a more life-affirming way to think. Or, changing thought patterns could seem like too much hard work.

We need to remember that life is constantly changing. Our thinking needs

consistent reevaluation to prevent stagnancy.

Just as the roses wintering in my garage are preparing for renewal, we can renew our thinking and have a greater experience of Life as a result.

**Affirmation: Recognizing and honoring the wonderfully dynamic nature of Life, I embrace the habit of consistently evaluating and renewing my thought patterns and welcome the growth that comes as a result.**

Note: I am happy to report that both tree roses that wintered in my garage here in Charlton survived and are producing new leaves. What a gift, especially this year with the closure of the gardens.

\*\*\*\*\*



\*\*\*\*\*

Do you have a favorite snack you like to make for the gardening volunteer day breaks? Send along the recipe, and perhaps I can include in a future newsletter. [yaddogardenpr@gmail.com](mailto:yaddogardenpr@gmail.com)

# YADDO GARDEN ASSOCIATION POTPOURRI

Spring 2020

Editor: Joanne McFadden

## Last, but not least...

Thank you to Jean Dugan for her tireless work as president of the Yaddo Garden Association for ten years. She did step down for a couple of years as required by our YGA by-laws, but Jean was always available to offer advice and leadership to our board members and volunteers.

Thank you, Jean, for being so committed to continuing the work of restoring and maintaining the historic, beautiful Yaddo Garden. Your calm approach to all matters of YGA, your organization to keep us on track of our mission, and your friendship has been invaluable to our success.

In the transition period of passing the torch to the new officers this past year, Jean was always willing to answer questions and provide knowledge of her experience as YGA president to make the process relatively seamless.

\*\*\*\*\*

## YGA Memberships 10/1/2019 - 4/17/2020

### Senior/Student

Anonymous  
Eleanor Boyle  
Margaret Bradley  
Ellen Brown  
Florence Campion  
Gloria Ciejka  
Ellen M. deLalla  
Charlotte Eaton  
Lynn M. Farenell  
Patricia Gallagher  
Gay Gamage  
Patricia Hoyt  
Barbara Kolapakka  
Nancy O'Leary

### Individual

Suzanne Brunelle  
Patricia Mangini  
Faith Palma  
Kathleen Sweet

Martha Van Patten

### Family

Donna and Richard Bates  
Lauriann and Henry Cardinali  
Janice Connors  
Heather and Michael Cushing  
Marilyn and Dominick DeLorio  
Victoria and Frank Schepps  
Vera and Marvin Weiss  
Joseph and Joyce Zanchelli

### Contributor

Jane and John Corrou  
Ellen and Todd Downing  
Barbara Hefter  
Dorothy Keliher  
Elena Porter  
Helen Porter  
Charles and Katie Richman  
Nancy and David Wilder

### Patron

R. Paul and Kathleen A. McCarty  
Pat Meaney and Joseph Zarynski  
Carmen Milligi  
Sheila and Donald Nelson

### Sponsor

Jean Dugan and Ben Ford

### Benefactor

Susan Brynteson  
John J. Thomas

## YGA Gifts 10/1/2019 - 4/17/2020

### General

GE Fund Matching Gifts Program  
Veronica Frazier  
Glenville Hills Garden Club  
Dorothy and Stephen Harran  
Marcelle O. King  
Rebecca Thomas  
Jane Adams Wait

*YADDO GARDEN ASSOCIATION  
POTPOURRI*

Spring 2020

Editor: Joanne McFadden

**In Memory**

Ricky Berger  
Michael and Donna Gnip

Rick Dunn  
Jane and John Corrou

Dick Farrell  
Jane and John Corrou

Florence and William Hinckley  
Nancy and David Wilder

Emily Koch  
Vera and Marvin Weiss

Matthew Dana Palmer  
Nancy and David Wilder

Audrey S. Pratt  
Jane and John Corrou

Norman Ross  
Ward A. Cavanaugh

Barbara Thomas  
John J. Thomas

Mary Lou Whitney  
Nancy and David Wilder

**In Honor**

Holly Grande  
Kim Klopstock

Jane Adams Wait  
Charles and Katie Richman  
Martha and Grant Van Patten  
Beth and George Vodapivc

**YADDO GARDEN ASSOCIATION  
312 Union Avenue  
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

I wish to support the YGA by becoming a  
garden volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ docent \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to become an annual YGA member

Individual \$35.00 to \$49.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Senior/student rate \$25.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Family \$50.00 to \$99.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Contributor \$100.00 to \$249.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Patron \$250.00 to \$499.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor \$500.00 to \$999.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Benefactor \$1,000.00 and above \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to  
support the maintenance of the Yaddo  
Gardens

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Please recognize my gift in memory  
of \_\_\_\_\_ or in honor of \_\_\_\_\_ (check one)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Please notify the following of my gift:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail the amount of the Gift /Membership  
together with the completed form to the address  
above or donate online at [www.yaddo.org](http://www.yaddo.org).