

## Winter Symposium & Pesticide Workshop

Save the dates for WVNLA's 2014 Pesticide Recertification Workshop on Jan. 23 and Winter Symposium on Jan. 24, both at the Summit Conference Center in Charleston. President Bill Mills has lined up an impressive slate of speakers including:

- Joseph Tychonievich, owner of Arrowhead Alpine Nursery in Michigan and author of "Plant Breeding for the Home Gardener."

- David Culp of Brandywine Cottage in Pennsylvania and author of "The Layered Garden."

- Jason Reeves, University of Tennessee horticulturist and "Fine Gardening" author.

- Rita Randolph, owner of Rita's Rare Plants in Tennessee and author of a special "Fine Gardening" issue on container gardening.

Local speakers will offer advice and tips on effective electronic media presence, garden photography and art placement in gardens.

WVNLA's annual meeting, at which members will vote on several issues, will precede the symposium.

Experts in pesticide safety, efficacy and regulations will prepare you and your crews for a safe and productive 2014 in the workshop.

Watch for upcoming registration information and remember to sign up early. Space is limited, especially for the Pesticide Workshop.

The Certified Horticulture Professional exam will also be given on Jan. 24. *See page 2 for details.*

## Dig into WVNLA's Fall Project

West Virginia Botanic Garden in Morgantown continues to grow into a natural and educational setting of inspirational landscapes, an endeavor the WVNLA is proud to support both financially and with materials and labor from our members.

The bucolic gardens were the scene of a successful and lovely fundraising event Aug. 4, "Summer Breeze Beneath the Trees," which was attended by WVNLA members John Jett, Pat Biafore, and Brad Bearce and executive director Julie Robinson.

Attendees were treated to delightful food and beverages and live musical entertainment. They relaxed under tents and participated in silent and live auctions all set in a location designed to showcase the gardens. Funds from the event and contributions will go toward the garden's general budget.

WVNLA members have a unique opportunity to participate in the associations' 2013 Fall Project on Friday, Oct. 4. Our "Volunteers in Bloom" will concentrate on the Shade and the Secret Gardens of the West Virginia Botanic Garden.

If you aren't able to join us for the work party, consider sending some herbaceous plants, for which the association will reimburse you. Non-invasive, shade-loving plants are most appropriate.

"Volunteers in Bloom" is an occasion for our members to provide a meaningful community service and also get to know some of the people active in the WVBG.

Please email Julie Robinson at [wvnlassoc@gmail.com](mailto:wvnlassoc@gmail.com) or call 304-553-1234 before Sept. 20, if you plan to attend or President Bill Mills at [williamjmills13@gmail.com](mailto:williamjmills13@gmail.com) or 304-552-7943 if you would like to provide plants.



Guests wandered past the gentle colors of late-summer flowers on their way to an evening fundraiser at WVBG.

## President's letter: WVNLA moves forward with exciting projects

Greetings.

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to Julie Robinson, the new Executive Director of the WVNLA. Julie is a great person to be working with, always enthusiastic, inquisitive, and more than willing to dig in. Julie comes from a background of journalism and management. She is also a very enthusiastic gardener, a perfect fit for her new position. Julie has already helped make us a better and stronger organization.

Our fall project once again has us returning to the West Virginia Botanic Garden (WVBG.) Our Board of Directors now has a voting position on their Board, as well as a place on their Planning Committee. Pat Biafore is representing us at their Board meetings and I have been

active on the Planning Committee. A recent committee meeting was attended by Jack LaQuatra, ASLA. Jack was a student of George Longenecker's and is responsible for drawing up the master plan for the garden. Jack is dynamic and a visionary man. He shared his feelings about what kind of structures should be considered for a Visitors Center. I left that meeting excited about shared ideas and for the future of the garden.

The funding that WVNLA has provided in the past, has encouraged WVBG to look for other sources of giving. A major foundation is strongly considering funding the new Visitors Center. This is a dream that seems to be rapidly coming to fruition.

Our annual Fall Project will return us to the Botanic Garden. The date is set for Friday, Oct. 4 at 9 a.m. Our focus will be on the Secret Garden, an area that was developed during last year's fall event. It is a small garden tucked under the canopy of *Tsuga canadensis* (Canadian Hemlock), cool and shady with

views to the lake beyond. We will also focus on expanding and enhancing the Shade Garden, an area that is now well established with some botanical treasures.

Last year's event provided immediate gratification for the volunteers and long term enhancement to the garden. I left having met some new friends with a feeling of partnership and civic commitment. I encourage you to consider joining us and the Garden's volunteers for the day. Lunch and beverages will be provided. Consider bringing your favorite digging tools. If you have plants that are appropriate for the shade, consider gifting some this time.

The agenda for both the Winter Symposium and the Pesticide Recertification days is firming up and once again, looking very exciting.

I hope to see many of you in Morgantown Oct. 4.

Sincerely,



Bill Mills, President



The WVBG Shade Garden will receive new plants during our work day.

## Prepare now for Certified Horticulture Professional exam

The next opportunity to take the Certified Professional Horticulturist exam will be Jan. 24, 2014, during the WVNLA's Winter Symposium. The objective of the CPH Program is to raise and improve the professional standards of the nursery, landscape and garden center industries by giving special recognition to individuals who have demonstrated a high level of competence in the principles and practices relevant to these industries.

Certification is for individuals only. Applicants must be sponsored by a WVNLA member and meet certain employment and education requirements. Visit our website [www.wvnla.org](http://www.wvnla.org) and check the Nov/Dec 2012 issue of the newsletter for more details.

Applicants must receive at least 70 percent on the examination, which is based on the CPH Training Manual and other pre-approved study materials. Training manuals may be purchased for \$100 per copy from WVNLA.

Call 304-553-1234 for more information.

# Family business flowers into national seedling grower

In 1970, Robert and Corena Barnitz opened a modest roadside produce stand with several greenhouses behind it in Mason, W.Va. Five sons and more than 50 years later, Bob's Market and Greenhouses is a major supplier of vegetable and annual plants and seedlings and top 10 producer of plugs and liners in the country.

Bob's will ship more than 115 million seeded bedding plant plugs this year.

The seedlings thrive in more than 1 million square feet in 22 acres of greenhouse space in the quiet riverside community. During peak production, Bob's employs more than 200 local residents.

Perhaps more compelling than president Robert Barnitz's success is the fact that his five vice presidents all bear his last name. His five sons play crucial roles in the family business, a remarkable feat of family dynamics in a time when few adult siblings settle in the same state, much less work together.

WVNLA board member Scott Barnitz handles retail sales and the rooted line division. An engineer by education, Scott helped design much of the automated systems that mix their custom planting medium, transport it along conveyors that reach high into the newest warehouse and fill and seed the trays.

Bobby Barnitz oversees seedling production and his wife Sue works in the office. Their son Alan works in shipping. Rick Barnitz is head grower and his son Eric Barnitz is head plug grower. Jeff Barnitz coordinates plant transportation. John Barnitz sorts out the intricacies of shipping. Scott's wife Anna Barnitz is CFO and treasurer.

Robert, 81, has stepped back from his involvement in the day-to-day operations, but he and all his sons accepted Greenhouse Grower Magazine's 2011 award for Operation of the Year.

In 1998, Bob's produced and sold 7 million plugs for Ball Seed Company. The 115 million they sold last year were exclusively for Ball. In 2005, Bob's added a product line of rooted plugs for Dummies USA, a German-based plant breeder. That business segment took off quickly. Today, Bob's produces about 4,000,000 rooted liners.



John, Bobby, Bob, Jeff, Rick, and Scott Barnitz all play crucial roles at Bob's Market and Greenhouses. Photos by John Morgan

HGTV recently launched a Home series, featuring branded home improvement and gardening products. This year, Bob's supplied colorful annuals grown together as seedlings in hanging baskets and in pots for the new line. HGTV specifies the well-considered combinations designed with visual appeal and a strong chance of performing well for consumers.

With HGTV's commanding marketing presence, the Home series success is promising, netting even more business for Bob's, where the Barnitz family takes enormous pride in customer service and an excellent product.

"We are excited about working with HGTV and hope we can get it to continue to grow," Scott said.

Despite the business's bustling wholesale trade, Bob's retains its hometown roots. A charming country store and garden center sits on the roadside stand's original site along W.Va. Route 62 in Mason. Indoors, shelves of fresh produce and Amish foods sit near bins of seeds. The garden center features tables filled with Bob's vegetable and flower plants as well as some herbs, perennials and shrubs.

Bob's also operates year round retail space in Belpre and Gallipolis, Ohio, seasonal retail in Parkersburg, wholesale and retail space in Atlanta and wholesale operations in Pittsburgh.

For more information, visit [www.bobsmarket.com](http://www.bobsmarket.com) or call 800-447-3760.



Pansies for fall planting fill the greenhouses.

# New director embraces representing green industry



When I told family and friends I was leaving my position as a feature writer for the *Charleston Gazette* to become the executive director of the West Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association, the nearly universal response was, "That's the perfect job for you!"

The reaction was due not to formal horticulture education (my background is in journalism and association management), but rather to a lifetime interest in gardening that shows in the landscape my husband and I nurture surrounding our Charleston home, the gardening magazines and books on our coffee tables and nearly omnipresent vases of fresh flowers and seasonal materials cut from our gardens.

My love of and respect for horticulture is rooted in a childhood cultivated by gardening parents. I watched my father's annual winter perusal of seed catalogs and subsequent seeding of trays whose contents flourished into healthy vegetable and flower plants. From those plants came fresh produce and the flowers that always graced my mother's tables.

I am thrilled for the opportunity to work for this historic and respected association with experts in an industry I appreciate. I look forward to learning about so many aspects of the green industry.

That I have much to learn was brought home not long after I took this job and visited OFA Short Course trade show in Columbus. I wandered the nearly endless aisles in astonishment at the equipment, technology and materials required by this industry.

And the plants! So many interesting varieties and newly developed species. The abundance of "fairy garden" vendors surprised me. I wondered if any of our members are targeting what seemed to be popular market.

The best way to get to know the business is surely to visit our members' facilities and feature them in our newsletter and on the website. I'm working my way around the state and appreciate the time each of you take to talk about your business, industry issues and what WVNLA can do to be an efficient and useful resource for our members.

This newsletter represents a return to desktop publishing (and to nearly unrecognizable software) for me. The design and content will surely evolve, and I hope you'll send suggestions my way as it does.

If you have thoughts to share, please don't wait for me to find my way to you. Contact me any time at [wvnlassoc@gmail.com](mailto:wvnlassoc@gmail.com) or 304-553-1234.

Julie Robinson

## MANTS means business

The deceptively sleepy month of January fills up quickly for WVNLA members with two important events. In addition to our Pesticide Workshop and Winter Symposium Jan. 23 -24, 2014 in Charleston (see page 1), members should note Jan. 8 – 10, 2014 on their calendars and plan to attend MANTS in Baltimore.

Nearly 1,000 exhibitors filled 30,000 of space in the 2013 business-only trade show, affirming the Mid-Atlantic Nursery's Trade Show's moniker as the "The Masterpiece of Tradeshows." WVNLA and both Maryland's and Virginia's Nursery and Landscape Associations share sponsorship of MANTS, as well as a significant portion of the profits.

Unlike other trade shows that offer seminars, demonstrations and workshops, MANTS attendees concentrate on doing business in the trade shows' aisles, a feature especially attractive to exhibitors. Once again, exhibitor space is filled, with some hopeful companies remaining on the waiting list.

Whether you're a first time attendee, or a seasoned exhibitor, MANTS offers ample opportunity to see what's new, network, and of course, buy.

For more information, visit [www.mants.com](http://www.mants.com) or call 800-431-0066.



A significant number of plant and accessory vendors at OFA targeted the fairy garden market.

## Book Review

## Gardeners trade hoes for pens to tell their stories

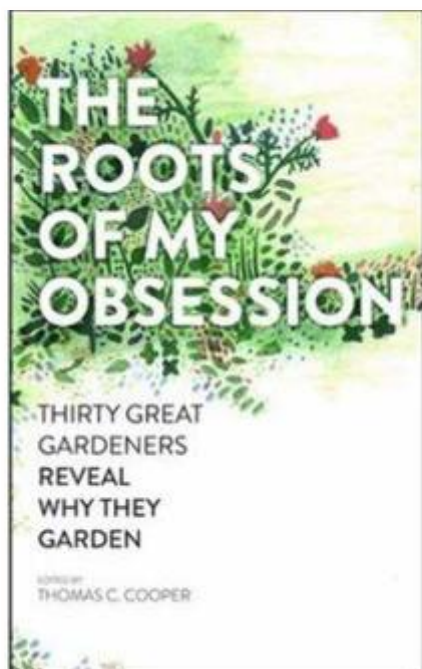
By Chris Chanlett

Readers of this newsletter and attendees of the nursery association's winter meetings would enjoy Thomas Cooper's book "The Roots of My Obsession: Thirty Great Gardeners Reveal Why They Garden." Thanks to the booking work of Bill Mills, Norman Cole and others, at least five of those 30 writers have appeared before us, and to my mind they all left memorable impressions.

Reading their short, thoughtful, and clever essays revived those memories and illuminated the diverse, sometimes contradictory reasons we work with plants. Some do it for the control and simplicity; some do it for the sheer collection or the wildness. Some do it for tranquility and some for intoxication. To advertise this book, I can simply exert a few sentences from authors

who have delivered riveting presentations at our meetings.

**Ken Druse** enthralled us with his gardening and home on an island in a river. "One fall, it started to rain and continued through the next day. I put on my boots and went out to take some pictures when I noticed a telephone pole floating by. (You never know when you are going to need a telephone



pole -- it has since been cut in half for giant gateposts in the deer fence.) I lassoed the pole with a garden hose and was tying it to a spruce tree when I realized the water was waist high and my camera and tripod had tipped over. The camera was ruined, but every picture came out." We saw the pictures.

**Rick Darke** wove a tapestry of textures before our eyes. "My garden is my time machine. Unlike a clock telling the passing time with relentless precision, the garden is a complex instrument capable of marking time and also of influencing the apparent passage of time...In this spectacularly technological age, when the only certainty is the accelerating pace of change, I

welcome any device which welcomes me to slow down."

**Anne Raver** is certainly a more vivid writer than presenter. "We stopped mowing so much of the old farmstead, which has been in my family since 1795; now, in place of a cropped lawn, tall grasses and ox-eye daisies sway on the slope that runs to the front of our bank barn. Rock, my partner (is no better word for a sixty-something boyfriend?), mowed a wide path to the front door of what is now our home—two floors of airy, wide-open spaces, with a wall of south-facing windows lighting the loft where I once built tunnels in the hay."

The mesmerizing collector and designer **Dan Hinckley** contributed a piece so bizarre and hilarious, I can only quote the conclusion. "We work in the dark, we do what we can—all the rest is madness."

The brilliant **William Cullina** takes us again through the cycle of seasons in his coastal edge in Maine. "Fall is a blend of melancholy, quiet celebration, and anticipation mixed with a slight fluttering anxiety. I am sad to see the chlorophyll drain from the garden but also happy for this, the best garden year I have ever had....Without winter, there would be no end—and no beginning. Last year's season would trail into this like a dull conversation filtering in from the next room and preventing me from sleep. Still, I can't wait for spring!"

Nor can we wait to see whom Bill Mills finds to bring us through next winter's doldrums and winter gathering.

**Chris Chanlett**, WVNLA board member and owner of Groundworks Nursery in Hinton, contributed this book review.

### Landscapers heed "Call before you dig"

A recent report published in natural gas industry publication cited landscapers as high contributors to underground utility line damage. Many people assume that utility lines are buried deeply enough that shallow ground digging by landscapers will not do any damage.

In reality, these lines are often buried just inches below the surface and are frequently damaged during tree, shrub and sprinkler system installations.

When a customer demands a quick installation, it's tempting to skip the call to 811 to request a utility check for underground lines. That can be a costly, dangerous and time-consuming gamble when a gas, electric or cable line is cut or damaged.

Visit [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com) for more information.

# Heavy, wet mulch creates hazardous delivery conditions

A delivery of a truckload of mulch took a wrong turn at Lavelette Nursery earlier this summer. It started out like any other mulch delivery, said nursery owner Mark Springer, who was on hand for the delivery.

"They'd delivered here many times. They unload on level, packed gravel and we've never had any trouble," said Mark, who is a WVNLA board member.

He and the driver were standing alongside the 40-foot trailer as the hydraulic lift began its ascent. The trailer bed was nearly at its peak, but the mulch hadn't started pouring out of the back of the trailer. The trailer and tractor rocked a couple of times and crashed to one side in an instant.

The wet, packed mulch that hadn't slid down the trailer made it top-heavy and unstable. When it fell, the tractor's frame twisted, but the incident could have been worse.

"If we had been standing on the side that fell, we would have been killed. It was a train wreck," said Mark.

After assessing the



Tons of mulch spilled out of the overturned trailer. Photos by Mark Springer



Cranes lifted the tractor and trailer into an upright position.

damage, they called a tow truck company, who sent two giant tow trucks, whose drivers said they couldn't pull the tractor upright with the heavy mulch on board. So a Lavelette employee manned a bobcat and scooped up what he could out of the bed. The tractor was righted and started up when the driver tried it, the but damage rendered it a total loss.

Later Mark spoke with the mulch company owner, who agreed that the accident probably happened because of the heavy mulch's failure to unload. He said that if the mulch hasn't started to dump at a certain point in the lift's ascent, it's time to bring it back down.

## WVNLA donation provides for newest Blue Star marker

A Blue Star Memorial Marker was recently installed at southern West Virginia's only veterans' cemetery in Institute. WVNLA contributed the cost of



Mary Lou Rader and a young friend placed flowers on site. the marker, which is one of several placed throughout the state through the West Virginia State Garden Club.

"We are so appreciative of West Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association's generous support of this marker," said Mary Lou Rader, who coordinated the donation and marker placement. She is a member of Skyview Garden Club, the marker's sponsor, in Charleston.

The Blue Star Memorial markers pay tribute to men and women who serve in the military. The Donel C. Kinnard Memorial Veterans Cemetery features other monuments to fallen soldiers and their families.

## Welcome back

We welcome returning WVNLA member Greenbrier Valley Dreamscapes in Lewisburg owned by Curtis Dowdy. This full service retail nursery also offers landscape construction and maintenance.

Greenbrier Valley Dreamscapes, Rt. 2, Box 164, Lewisburg, WV 24901. Phone: 304-661-6224. Email: [mail@greenbriervalleydreamscapes.com](mailto:mail@greenbriervalleydreamscapes.com).

# Southern Nursery Association is back in the saddle

After a six-year hiatus, Southern Nursery Association held a trade show in Atlanta in August, followed by a meeting of the state officers from member nursery and landscape associations. Representatives from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas and West Virginia attended the meeting, which was coordinated by returning SNA officers Danny and Karen Summers.

The members discussed problems common to their associations such as declining membership and less profitable and smaller trade shows. MANTS to date continues to have a vendor waiting list and draw big numbers.

They shared successes such as partnerships with other associations to sponsor tradeshow and conferences, reduced student dues, offering certification courses on-line, updating websites and offering more social/networking events for members.

Charlie Hall of Texas A&M discussed the recession's impact on the industry and how we missed the boat on establishing the industry as "green" and relevant to buyers today. He pointed out that the

average American spends more on pets than on nursery and landscape products and services.

His solution centered on selling consumers that industry products are both green and good for their health, two areas that today's buyers consider attractive.

Bob Fitch, a former nursery and landscape association executive, said that as organizations lose members and funding, they must be especially efficient. One method is to home in on an organization's message and stick with it. WVNLA's board is currently fine-tuning our mission statement with that very objective in mind.

Michael Geary of American Nursery Landscape Association updated the group on the ANLA and OFA merger, explaining that the move was prompted as a cost-saving and efficiency measure.

ANLA will continue to operate in Washington D.C., where its staff will lobby for legislation favoring the nursery and landscape industry. OFA's operations will remain in Columbus, Ohio, where staff will coordinate marketing and OFA Short Course.

Visit [www.sna.org](http://www.sna.org).

## G&G Nursery owner proposes state-wide industry "Pink Day"

Every year, Brett Merritt invites the public to G&G Nursery, his wholesale nursery in Lesage, for retail sales twice in the spring and once in the fall. Customers wander through the rows of trees and shrubs and make purchases, all the while getting to know a local business.

Brett considers the day an opportunity for goodwill in his community and donates a percentage of the day's sales to a worthwhile charity. Past recipients include Golden Girls Group Home in Ceredo and the Lilly House in Dominican Republic.

This year, Brett is partnering with St. Mary's Hospital's "Path to a Cure" on Sept. 28 with a "Pink Day," a program developed by Proven Winners to benefit breast cancer research. Proven Winners donates \$1 from the sale of each Invincibelle Spirit "Annabelle" hydrangea. They encourage retailers to go a step further with "Pink Days" to profit breast cancer research. Brett suggested WVNLA sponsor a statewide "Pink Day" in the future.

"My thought was simply that it would be powerful if our entire association could participate in some coordinated way next year," he said.

Check out details and resources at [www.provenwinners.com/professionals/retailers/programs/pink-day](http://www.provenwinners.com/professionals/retailers/programs/pink-day).



Proven Winners donates a portion of sales from each Invincibelle Spirit hydrangea to breast cancer research.



## Paying your dues

Although the official deadline has passed and we've had a good response, we continue to accept WVNLA membership renewals and dues for the 2013-2014 term. Members should have received a notice in July. As a reminder, Active Memberships are \$35, Associate Memberships are \$25, and Affiliate Memberships are \$5.

If you need a member renewal form, please email [wvnlassoc@gmail.com](mailto:wvnlassoc@gmail.com) or call 304-553-1234. WVNLA member dues are a real bargain when compared with those of other states' nursery and landscape associations' dues.

## Dates of note

- Oct. 4 Volunteers in Bloom work party -- West Virginia Botanic Gardens, Morgantown
- Oct. 23 WVNLA Board of Directors Meeting  
10 a.m. Stonewall Jackson Resort.

### 2014

- Jan. 8-10 MANTS, Baltimore, Md
- Jan. 23 WVNLA Pesticide Recertification Workshop, Charleston
- Jan. 24 WVNLA Winter Symposium, Charleston

## Too Much Information?

Relevant industry-related emails and bulletins from groups such as PLANET, ANLA, SNA and various state agriculture departments are passed along to WVNLA members via email. If you do not wish to receive these emails, please respond to [wvnlassoc@gmail.com](mailto:wvnlassoc@gmail.com) with appropriate instructions.

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