

President's Message

Hello, WVNLA members, my name is David Hill II, and I am the new president of our organization. I want to take a moment to introduce myself and let you know that I am excited and honored to be representing this organization. I



David Hill II

have been a long-time member or associate of a member—dating back to 2002.

I own Three Trees Design and Landscaping, which I formed in

January 2010 as a leap of faith, after working for a few landscaping companies in Kentucky and West Virginia. We are a design/build company specializing in hardscapes, decking, and naturalized outdoor play spaces.

After graduating from Marshall University, I started my landscaping career by learning hands-on and soaking up as much information as I could. I was fortunate enough to have some great mentors along the way who really helped to set my pathway into this industry. I took inspiration not only from them but from notable landscape designers/architects around the country. This learning evolved into me creating and developing my own style.

I live in the Charleston area with my wife, Laura; son, Ryan; and our crazy pup, Paris. I enjoy baseball games with my son, spending quality time with friends, and traveling with my family.

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Honoree and Incoming Officers Announced at Annual Meeting

WVNLA members held their annual meeting on January 30 during the Winter Symposium. Outgoing president Bud Cottrill announced WVNLA officers for 2019-2020 term. They are

- Dave Hill, President
- Steve Saunders, Vice President
- Mark Springer, Secretary/Treasurer
- Bud Cottrill, Past President

Bud also thanked outgoing board members Norman Cole and Lynne Schwartz-Barker for their years of faithful service. Norm's involvement as a board member can be marked in decades rather than years. He served as WVNLA president and as one of the Association's three representatives on the MANTS Board of Directors.

He also served as president of the MANTS board, as well as president of the Southern Nursery Association. We appreciate the many years of service and guidance Norm has given WVNLA.

The conclusion of Lynne's three-year term as a board member coincided with her recently announced retirement. During her time on the board, Lynne helped to implement and publicize several initiatives, including summer garden tours and fresh networking opportunities. She also attended industry leadership conferences. She continues to serve on WVNLA's Education

Committee, helping to plan the Winter Symposium. We thank Lynne for her service and wish her the best in retirement.

Also during the lunchtime meeting, Bud presented the **WVNLA Outstanding Person of the Year** award to Bill Mills, who was, coincidentally, enjoying his final day of employment as the executive director of the West Virginia Botanic Garden in Morgantown. He is now retired.

Bud recognized Bill's seven years as a board member and his service as 2013-14 president. He thanked Bill not only for his leadership on WVNLA's board but also for his accomplished career in landscape design and dedication to public gardening.



Outgoing president Bud Cottrill (left) presents Bill Mills with the 2019 WVNLA Outstanding Person of the Year award.

From the Executive Director

Speaker Inspires Neighborhood Project

I truly regret that any of our members missed our Winter Symposium on January 30. The speakers were dynamic and inspiring. I've heard people comment that the line-up represented our best yet. We had nearly 1.5 times as many registered attendees as we did in 2018. As always with a winter event, inclement weather kept some of you away. Snow fell in some areas of the state (naturally!), prompting cancellations for attendees who had plowing obligations or chose not to risk snowy travel.

Our Education Committee decided to move the 2020 conference to mid-February in the hope that snowfall will be less likely. There's no predicting that, of course, but we'll give it a try.

I had the pleasure of listening to all five excellent speakers on the design side of our program. I was particularly taken with Claudia West's presentation on the design of plant communities for resilient landscapes.

Based on *Planting in a Post-Wild World*, the book she coauthored with Thomas Rainer (who spoke at our 2015 Winter Symposium), Claudia explored the inspiration found in nature, where plants instinctively thrive without soil amendment, fertilizer, mulch, irrigation, or pesticides. They grow as communities of layered plants that naturally establish themselves in a functional and ecologically sound pattern that is specifically tuned to a particular site. These communities grow equally well in a rural meadow, in the notoriously dead spaces in urban medians, and between concrete sidewalks and streets.

Claudia talked about a happy middle ground between these wild communities and the rigid,



Site of proposed pollinator bed at Fort Scammon.

cultivated plantings, separated by mulched ground, that we see in typical urban and suburban landscapes. The concept of designed plant communities, featuring plants that are known to work together, provides a solution that is both beautiful and self-sustaining.

Wild plant communities contain layers of low-lying groundcovers, mid-level fillers, and some taller, structural plants. The groundcovers serve as mulch, holding moisture in the ground and crowding out weeds.

It all sounded like the solution to a planting dilemma our garden club faces in my neighborhood, which is home to a Civil War-era earthen fort. The City of Charleston maintains the fort grounds, which are surrounded by grass. One of our garden club members suggested that we convert some of that lawn into a pollinator- and butterfly-friendly planting. She had just read an article on the declining number of these naturally occurring oases, due to meadows being converted to suburban lawns.

She and I are researching which plants will naturally thrive in this sunny, 1,200-foot spot, and plan to use clumping perennials and grasses and self-seeding annuals to fill it. We'll install groundcover that suits the site instead of mulch. The city's only task will be to cut it down in late fall, rather than mow many times throughout the growing season.

So far, the City of Charleston (less mowing!), the Historic Landmarks Commission, the Municipal Beautification Committee, and the city's reigning historian have all signed off. Some have even pledged assistance. We still have some hoops to clear but hope to establish our designed plant community, à la Claudia West and Thomas Rainer, this year.

Butterflies, birds, and bugs are welcome.

Julie Robinson

WVNLA Executive Director

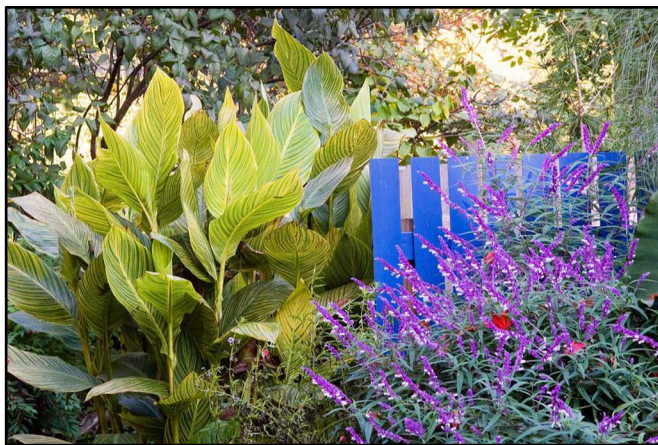
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Since being on the board of directors, I have witnessed firsthand the growth and potential for growth in our organization in promoting the green industry throughout our state. We have a thoughtful and devoted board, with whom I am honored to be working over the next two years. We exist to support our members. That is my goal. We hope to set some new and exciting ideas into motion in the coming years and really promote our industry throughout our great state.

I am always available to talk about how we can promote our industry and innovative landscape or design options, or any other ideas that can help our wonderful little state. Also, anyone who truly knows me would say that I am not shy about chatting!

Take care and see you out there!



Canna americanallis 'Pretoria'



Bismarckia nobilis



Euphorbia continifolia



Ensete ventricosum 'Maurelii'



Ensete ventricosum 'Maurelii'

HOT, HOT, HOT!

Infuse drama and color in warm weather beds and pots with tropical plants, advised Andrew Bunting in his presentation at the Winter Symposium. He shared the photos on this page for design inspiration. *All photos by Andrew Bunting, who is vice president of horticulture and collections at the Atlanta Botanical Garden.*



Colocasia esculenta 'Maui Gold'

AmericanHort and WVNLA Support Release of Additional H-2B Visas

AmericanHort, the green industry's leading advocacy association, forwarded a strongly worded Congressional letter in early March to Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Kirstjen Nielsen, asking her to quickly release the nearly 70,000 additional temporary, nonimmigrant H-2B visas in excess of the statutory annual cap of 66,000. Time is of the essence, as seasonal landscaping workers are needed immediately.

The letter was signed by a bipartisan group of 27 senators and 110 representatives, including West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin and Rep. Dave McKinley. West Virginia Sen. Shelley Moore Capito and Reps. Carol Miller and Alex Mooney did not sign the letter.

A delegation of Zach Crede of Crede Lawn and Landscape in Scott Depot, Pat and Michael Biafore of Biafore Landscape Development in Morgantown, and Justin White of Premier Landscapes and Lawn Care, also in Morgantown, traveled to Washington, DC, in February to meet with Sen. Capito and urge her to support the release of the additional visas. All of West Virginia's representatives have received regular communications from WVNLA in support of the full release of visas.

Since then, the Biafores received the unwelcome news that they would not receive their H-2B workers for the second consecutive year. Pat Biafore's comments were included in follow-up letters to Sen. Capito and Reps. Miller and Mooney. Pat explained the Biafores' dire situation in those letters:

Biafore Landscape Development has successfully used the H-2B program from 2006 to 2017. Because of it, we grew into a larger landscape design build company that services clients in our tri-county area. We have been able to staff 12 to 15 full-time positions year-round.

We did not receive our visas from the H-2B program for 2018 and unfortunately did not for 2019 either. It has been quite an adjustment for us. We have dropped to 8 full-time employees and our revenue has dropped over 50 percent.

It has proven very difficult to hire American workers into these seasonal positions because of the current low unemployment rate, the lack of American laborers willing to do this work anymore, and the inability of many to pass a drug test or consistently show up for work.

2018 was a difficult year for us and it is looking like 2019 won't be much better. We will not be able to commit to new contracts or clients once again because we don't have enough workers for the jobs. We find ourselves in the position of

being a previously thriving and growing business that suddenly cannot pay its bills or grow.

Stories like the Biafores' should demonstrate to lawmakers and other influencers the terrible effect this seemingly arbitrary foot-dragging has on real American businesses and employees. Their testimonies reinforce the efforts of groups such as AmericanHort.

Of the Congressional letter, Craig Regelbrugge, senior vice president of Advocacy & Research at AmericanHort, notes, "With serious labor shortages bearing down on our industry as spring nears, we're part of a full-court press for relief. This is a timely, strong, bipartisan letter from Congress compelling swift action to free up more visas in time to help secure a successful spring. Hopefully, Secretaries Nielsen and [Alexander] Acosta [Secretary of Labor] will heed the call."

AmericanHort and partners in the H-2B Workforce Coalition have been working diligently to encourage DHS and elected officials to address the demand for temporary, seasonal workers. This strong show of bipartisan support is an acknowledgement of those efforts.

Source: AmericanHort and staff reports

In Memory of Rudy Horst

It is with great sadness that we note WVNLA member Rudy Horst's passing on November 23, after an extended illness. Until he became ill, Rudy owned and operated TallyHo Landscaping in Lewisburg. Before he opened his own firm, he worked for The Greenbrier. He was a Certified Professional Horticulturist and certified arborist. Please read details about his life in his obituary, which appeared in the *West Virginia Daily News*, wvdailynews.net/obituaries/4545-rudolph-horst.

Rudy is survived by his wife, Suzanne, and three sons: Karl, Oliver, and Brenden; his mother, Lennis Horst; and two brothers and a sister.



Rudy Horst

Introducing WVNLA's Scholarship Winners for 2019

West Virginia University students Brent Mitchell of Shady Spring and Nicholas Oxendale of Oak Hill have been selected as the 2019 WVNLA Marcus W. Rennix Memorial Scholarship recipients. Both are landscape architecture majors.

Brent, who plans to minor in horticulture, has owned and operated his own landscaping company, HighLine Landscaping, for three years. He began the company while attending Concord University and Bridgemont Community and Technical College, where he knocked out some of his early semesters of course work. His experience with his landscaping business, which has grown each year, led him to a green industry career path.

"My decision to become a landscape architect was based upon my business. I hope to one day run my company as efficiently as possible with all the knowledge that I will gain in this program. Landscape architects focus on aesthetically pleasing areas in the field and that is exactly what I strive to do," Brent said in his application.

Landscape Architecture Assistant Professor Elisabeth Orr, who has instructed Brent in several courses, recommended him for the scholarship. "I am certain he will continue to excel in our program, and I expect him to be an accomplished professional



Brent Mitchell

in the field after he graduates," she said.

group fitness class instructor, and AutoCad instructor.

Nicholas particularly enjoys landscape architect classes that take students on-site for projects. "Our natural terrain is a thing of wonder, but it can be fragile. Development must recognize this and adapt

projects to be compatible with it. I would hope to use in my professional career as a landscape architect the principals of adapting economic and development projects to the terrain to enhance both human life and the environment," he wrote in his application.



Nicholas Oxendale

Associate Professor Peter Butler wrote a glowing recommendation for Nicholas, whom he has known for the three years Nicholas has been a WVU student.

"Nick is a highly motivated student who strives to find creative and thoughtful solutions to complex design problems. ... His communication skills are excellent. He has a strong interest in plant materials and their application to improving aesthetics, quality of life, and spatial definition in our contemporary environments," wrote Peter.

Congratulations to both Brent and Nicholas, met all the requirements of the scholarship. We wish them the best as they pursue careers in the green industry.

Board of Directors Meets April 10

WVNLA's Board of Directors meets at 10 a.m. April 10 in the Charleston Area Alliance conference room. If you have an area of concern or a suggestion to bring before the board, be sure to contact one of the members (listed on the back cover of this newsletter) so the members can discuss the issue. Or, contact Julie Robinson at 304-553-1234 or wvnlassoc@gmail.com.

High School Agriculture Students Tackle CPH Exam and Certification

This spring, WVNLA launched an exciting initiative aimed at attracting young people to green industry careers. We partnered with the West Virginia Department of Education to make the Certified Professional Horticulturist (CPH) curriculum, exam, and certification available to high school agriculture students.

When apprised of the potential partnership at their 2018 fall conference, high school agriculture teachers said they were always looking for opportunities for students in their programs to graduate with certifications that would further either their future employment or education opportunities. They reviewed the CPH study manual and said that they already covered much of the material in the existing Plant Systems curriculum.

Jason Hughes, Department of Education lead coordinator and state FFA advisor, worked with us to make the CPH curriculum and exam securely accessible online in the school system. He also

translated the students' Plant Systems course work and their supervised work experience into a good start toward the education and experience requirements for CPH certification.

Informing West Virginia's high school agriculture instructors via e-mail about the program recently, Jason wrote, "I am very pleased to announce an incredible opportunity for your students enrolled in the Plant Systems pathway: the opportunity to become a Certified Professional Horticulturist! A CPH designation indicates that the holder is a trained horticulture professional with demonstrable knowledge of the industry. ... A huge thank you to the West Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association Board of Directors for providing the test and study materials at no cost to your program or your students."

Interest in the program is strong, Jason tells us. The high school student exams will be administered in early May.

Log on to WVNLA Website to Track Continuing Ed Credits

Certified Professional Horticulturists (CPH) may now update their continuing education requirements on our website. As was earlier announced, all CPH holders are required to submit 30 credit units every three years, effective January 1, 2019.

Credits are roughly equivalent to the hours spent in an industry educational endeavor. The requirement could easily be met through annual participation in WVNLA events such as the Winter Symposium, summer tours, training, or participation in other activities such as writing an article for our newsletter. Passing the CPH exam earns 10 credits, so we're jumpstarting all current CPH holders with 10 credits as the system is implemented. That's 10 fewer credits you'll need to earn to meet your 2022 renewal requirement. Any WVNLA member or employee of a WVNLA member is eligible to take the exam.

Attending MANTS or other industry trade shows and educational events earns credits. Events not associated with WVNLA require preapproval, which can be obtained by e-mailing event information to wvnlassoc@gmail.com.

In the past, an obstacle to CEU crediting has been the onerous task of tracking individual credits and updating CPH holders as to their status. Our new member software allows members to do that themselves online. To update your status, visit

wvnla.org, go to your member profile, and hit the Actions pulldown menu in the upper right corner. Select Add Continuing Education Credit. The information you supply will populate the Education Credits section of your profile.

If credits are not obtained, submitted, and tracked within the three-year renewal period, the certification will be revoked and the holder will be required to retake and pass the exam, which includes a \$25 fee.

Some examples of CEU sources are:

- Full-day, industry-related seminar/class, 8 credits
- WVNLA Summer Tour, 4 credits
- Write an article for WVNLA News, 3 credits
- WVNLA board member or committee member, 4 credits/year
- WVNLA officer, 5 credits/year
- Passing the WVNLA CPH exam, 10 credits
- WVNLA Winter Symposium attendance, 8 credits
- Pesticide recertification training, 8 credits
- MANTS or other industry trade show, 5 credits
- Lectures, in-service training, webinars, 1 credit per hour

All non-WVNLA events must be pre-approved.

2019 MANTS Reports Best Attendance in More Than a Decade



Acorn Farms



Cole Nurseries



G&G Nursery



Grant County Mulch, Inc.

The Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show (MANTS) celebrated another successful event January 9 – 11 with increased attendee numbers and the debut of innovative new products on the show floor. A diverse group of green industry professionals traveled from across the country and several continents to gather in Baltimore for the show's 49th year.

MANTS is co-sponsored by the state nursery and landscape associations of Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia. MANTS proceeds constitute a significant portion of WVNLA's annual revenue.

MANTS 2019 welcomed over 11,600 total registrants (including exhibitors), the highest attendance record in the last eleven years. Attendees from 48 states and 16 foreign countries had the opportunity to visit 956 exhibiting companies, spread out over 1,550 booths, to do business, network and learn about the latest green industry trends they will see in 2019.

In addition to the increased registration, business was thriving at the premier green industry marketplace once again this year. More than 87% of MANTS attendees were designated as making or influencing purchasing decisions. 3,671 non-exhibiting/buying companies were represented on the show floor, and it showed according to MANTS exhibitors:

"I do every show from here to Portland, and this is the show of shows – the very best. MANTS has been quite successful for me," explained Brian McCall, sales manager, Bobbex in Connecticut. "I've been meeting new customers and writing new business. I've been exhibiting for at least 15 years, and I look forward to coming back every year."

MANTS will be celebrating its 50th anniversary as the Masterpiece of Trade Shows on Jan. 8-10, 2020. Founded in 1970 with 64 original exhibitors, MANTS is now one of the largest private trade shows serving the horticulture industry and the premier green industry marketplace for finding plants and nursery stock, landscape and garden items, heavy and light duty equipment, tools, furniture and hundreds of other allied industry products. Visit www.mants.com or call (410) 296-6959.



Hawksridge Farms



KLYN Nurseries



Saunders Brothers



WVNLA



WVNLA



Willoway

WVNLA NEWS

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Welcome New Members

Laura Cox Planning and Design

Active member

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mslauracox@outlook.com
Landscape architect

Manna Meal Community Garden

Active member

Jean Simpson
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304-610-2518
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Nonprofit vegetable and flower garden

Maryland Plants and Supplies

Associate member

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Lawn and landscape maintenance, irrigation

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