

President's Message

Greetings and salutations.

As winter weather creeps in and the end the year looms only weeks away, I am excited to recharge my internal batteries with some quality family time, indoor hobbies, and



Bobby Gompers
WVNLA President

fraternizing with colleagues and peers at the WVNLA Winter Symposium, as well as at the MANTS show.

For me, this down time is a gift, and a time of the year that I anticipate and embrace.

Looking back on the past year, I am encouraged with the progress made in key areas in our industry such as workforce development, plant development (especially *Norman Cole at Cole Nurseries*), education and the resurgence in numbers of students exploring horticulture and landscape architecture at the next level. I applaud all our members that have been involved in these efforts, and thank you for your commitment to the cause.

Be sure to check out the comprehensive *Landscape Plants for West Virginia* at the WVNLA Winter Symposium on Feb. 11, 2025. Thank you to Julie Robinson, our Executive Director, who was the lead on this, and did a really nice job pulling everything together. I would also like to acknowledge and thank our board members Bud Cottrill, Mark Springer, and John Jett for their contributions to the guide as well. We are lucky to have such a dedicated group.

Please see *PRESIDENT'S COLUMN* on page 6.

Hear Interesting and Inspiring Experts at Our Winter Symposium

Don't miss the chance to connect with colleagues and catch up on techniques and practices at our 2025 Winter Symposium on Feb. 11 at Embassy Suites in Charleston. The two speaker tracks focus on design and business growth. You'll hear inspiring landscape designers and innovators in one session and garner invaluable business advice from industry experts in the other session.

Profit Speakers

Business owners and managers are sure to pick up some tools to refine performance and results from our team of experienced speakers. Noted Design/Build guru **Jody Shilan** will line out "Design/Build Process From the Initial Call to Final Payment" in two illuminating sessions.

Experts on taxes, employee safety, licensing and permitting will present facts and answer relevant questions for businesses of all sizes in a "Taking Your Business to The Next Level: What You Need To Know" panel discussion. You'll want to hear **Steven Harmon, CPA**; **Amanda Mason**, WVU Health & Safety Extension; and a licensing specialist from the West Virginia Department of Labor cover the sometimes confusing and complex requirements for business owners.

Putting your best foot forward on social media and marketing can be a challenge. The West Virginia Small Business Development Center (WVSBDC) is all about helping small businesses succeed. **Will Miller** of WVSBDC will finish out the day's business presentations with information on making social media and marketing work for you.

Design Speakers

Christopher Barrett Sheridan, The Flower Sommelier, kicks off the design-oriented session as he highlights the often overlooked role of fragrance in design when he presents

Please see *SYMPOSIUM* on page 2.



Maryanne Willburn encouraged the use of tropicals in planters and landscapes at the 2024 Winter Symposium.

Hot Off The Press: *Landscape Plants for West Virginia*

We are pleased to announce that our *Landscape Plants for West Virginia* will be unveiled at the Winter Symposium on Feb. 11 in Charleston. Attendees will receive personal copies. The 80-page, full-color publication contains photos, descriptions, growing requirements and mature sizes of more than 500 plants commonly used in or recommended for West Virginia.

After the Symposium, the guides will be available free to WVNLA members and are intended for use by landscapers during client presentations, or as an educational tool, for distribution in garden centers and in public green spaces, and at industry events.

The guidebooks were edited and produced in-house, with editorial direction from WVNLA board of directors members Bud Cottrill, John Jett and Mark Springer.

"I am excited for WVNLA to offer this high-quality informational publication to our members and the public. The photos and descriptions will be an invaluable tool for us when meeting with clients to discuss a design," said WVNLA president Bobby Gompers.

After distribution to Winter Symposium attendees, one copy of the guide will be mailed to all WVNLA members. They may request additional copies.



Winter Symposium attendees will receive a complimentary copy of *Landscape Plants for West Virginia*.

SYMPOSIUM (Continued from page 1)

"Capture the Spirit of the Garden: Designing with Fragrant Flowers and Aromatic Foliage."

Mark Highland, Organic Mechanic, will get to the root of the matter with "Soil Amendments and BioChar: Landscape Value and Benefits." He'll delve into the drastic improvements that changes to the soil can provide.

An expert on cultural landscape research and planning, West Virginia University's **Peter Butler**, landscape architecture professor, will take us through the progression of landscape planning in "Garden Design, A Historic Perspective."

We'll finish out the session with lighting expert

Aaron Perruchon, of Lumien Lighting and his look at the "Evolution of Outdoor Lighting Design."

WVNLA members are invited to attend our Annual Breakfast Meeting at 8:30 a.m., before the education sessions start at 9:30 a.m. There is no additional cost to attend the breakfast, but registration is required.

Lunch for all attendees is included and will feature an introduction of our 2025 Marcus W. Rennix scholarship recipients and door prize drawings.

Cost to attend is \$50 for WVNLA members and \$100 for nonmembers.

Register online at wvnla.org.

Vendors: Grab Their Attention at Your Symposium Exhibitor Table

The Winter Symposium will again feature displays and exhibits from green industry businesses. Attendees should have plenty of time during the day to chat with vendors, especially during breaks and a 1¼ hour lunch period.

Tables will be available in an open area outside

of the classroom and lunch areas. Cost to rent a 10-foot, skirted table is \$25. A limited number of spaces are available and will be allocated in order of registration.

To register, visit wvnla.org.

WVNLA Announces \$25,000 in 2025 Scholarships to Landscape Architecture and Horticulture Students

Five in-state students attending West Virginia University (WVU) studying landscape architecture and horticulture are receiving \$5,000 each, thanks to WVNLA's Marcus W. Rennix scholarship program. The WVNLA scholarship fund was created in 1986. The first award was \$1,000 and given to one recipient in 1987.

The WVU scholars will be recognized at the association's Feb. 11 Winter Symposium in Charleston. The scholarship winners are:



Penelope Edwards

- **Penelope Edwards** of Morgantown, a senior majoring in Landscape Architecture

- **Chelsea Elliott** of Bridgeport, a senior majoring in Landscape Architecture



Samuel Glazier

- **Sam Glazier** of Charleston, senior in Landscape Architecture



Chelsea Elliott

- **Alaira Hudson** of Davis, a senior majoring in Landscape Architecture

- **Hailey Lane** of New Martinsville, a studying Horticulture.

Glazier and Lane were 2024 recipients of the Rennix scholarship and met guidelines for

reapplying. Competition was high this year, with an abundance of applicants, which challenged board members to make their selections.



Hailey Lane

The criteria prioritizes scholarships to West Virginia citizens wherever they are studying in an effort to support the nursery and landscape industry in West Virginia. The Marcus W. Rennix scholarship applications are accepted annually via the WVNLA website through Sept. 30. Applicants seeking scholarship funding must be studying horticulture, landscape architecture, or nursery and greenhouse management. Students must be in-state residents who have completed half the required courses in ornamental horticulture or landscape architecture and maintained at least a 2.5 grade point average.



Alaira Hudson

Welcome New Member

Seasonal Services Garden Center

Active member

Rodney and Jennifer Busey

9109 Winchester Ave.

Bunker Hill, WV 25413

304-229-2914

seasonalservicesgardencenter.com

jennifer@seasonalservicesgardencenter.com

rodney@seasonalservicesgardencenter.com

Landscape and lawn maintenance, retail garden center.



WVNLA board members gather the West Virginia Botanic Garden's moon gate after a recent board meeting on site.

Have You Filed?

Corporate Transparency Act Deadline Looms

The Corporate Transparency Act, which went into effect in January 2024, may require your small business to report information about ownership to the government. Under the act, many U.S. small business owners are required to file corporate transparency reports with beneficial ownership information.

For most eligible businesses, the filing deadline is January 1, 2025. Those who fail to file by this deadline — or fail to update this information if needed — could face up to two years imprisonment and fines up to \$10,000, in addition to civil penalties of up to \$591 per day.

What is the Corporate Transparency Act?

The CTA was enacted in 2021 to combat illicit activity including tax fraud, money laundering, and financing for terrorism by capturing more ownership information for specific U.S. businesses operating in or accessing the country's market. Under the new legislation, businesses that meet certain criteria must submit a Beneficial Ownership Information (BOI) Report to the U.S. Department of Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN). This report provides details identifying individuals who are associated with the reporting company.

The CTA was established to prevent individuals with malicious intent from hiding or benefitting from the ownership of their U.S. entities to facilitate illegal operations which, according to Congress, is a widely-used tactic that affects national security and economic integrity.

Who is considered a beneficial owner of a company?

According to the CTA, an individual qualifies as a beneficial owner if they directly or indirectly have a significant ownership stake in a company. This person either has a major influence on the reporting company's decisions or operations, owns at least 25% of the company's shares, or has a similar level of control over the company's equity.

What information must be reported about a

company's beneficial owners?

All reporting companies must provide their legal name and trademarks, as well as their current U.S. address, which could be either the address of its main business site or, for foreign-based companies, their U.S. operational location. They'll also need to provide a taxpayer identification number and specify the jurisdiction where they were formed or registered.

Businesses registered or established post-January 1, 2024, must provide information regarding the business, its beneficial owners, and its company applicants — including owners' and applicants' names, addresses, birthdays, and identification numbers (such as a license or passport number), and the jurisdiction of the documents. Businesses established before that date

can omit information regarding company applicants, and must only submit information on the business and beneficial owners.

While the CTA does not require businesses to submit annual reports, the initial filing period may not be the only time you'll be required to submit information.

"In addition to the required initial filing, there are requirements to update the original filing when

things change," explained Roger Harris, President of Padgett Business Services. "Some of the things that require an updated filing are not things a business owner has ever thought were important to track, and the timeline to report these changes can be as short as 30 days."

Harris noted that business owners may be surprised by some requirements for updated filings. For instance, if a beneficial owner changes their address, legally changes their name due to marriage or divorce, or obtains a new driver's license, it may necessitate an update to a company's BOI report. Operational changes or a new delegation of authority could also qualify.

"If you make changes in the operation and delegation of duties within your business that could

Continued on next page.



Board Members Tour Newly Installed Entrance at the WV Botanic Garden

Following the completion of a major paving project late last year, the West Virginia Botanic Garden (WVBG) shifted its focus to enhancing the main entry near the new Visitors Center. Phil Cole, site manager and designer at WVBG presented several case studies and concepts to the garden's planning committee.

The committee pulled together different elements they wanted to see highlighted in the new entry design, which included native sandstone accent walls, accentuated beds with bold colors, textures and evergreens. WVBG presented the plans and budget to the West Virginia Nursery & Landscaping Association whose board members voted to provide all the funding for the project.

The entry design consists of a series of circular stone garden walls that provide elevated landscapes on both sides of the entrance. The existing sign was raised and pushed closer to the road. A rotating selection of annuals will dominate the lower front borders.

The beds within the walls have sweeping drifts of warm season grasses like purple lovegrass, *Eragrostis spectabilis*, and colorful perennials including giant hyssop, *Agastache*; both new plants to WVBG. The landscape is punctuated with boulders and unique conifers, including a Limber pine, *Pinus flexilis* 'Vanderwolf's Pyramid' and the regionally named Canaan Fir or West Virginia



Balsam, *Abies balsamea* subsp. *Phanerolepis*; a true native tree to West Virginia. The tree, donated by Jim and Laura Rockis of Morgantown, is a stately focal point directly next to the entry sign.

Originally found in the Canaan Valley, these special firs have an interesting history and are becoming more popular in the Christmas tree trade due to their tidy appearance and adaptability to a wide range of soils and environments.

The earthwork, planting and lighting was installed by WVBG staff members and volunteers this fall.

Reprinted with permission from the WVBG's newsletter.

FILING

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be considered to give a new person substantial control of your business, you could be required to update your filings, even if the person performing those duties did not own any of the business," said Harris.

What is the beneficial ownership information reporting process?

Reporting companies have a limited time to file their initial BOI reports:

- For qualifying reporting companies established before the above date, the filing deadline is January 1, 2025.
- Those created between January 1, 2024,

and January 1, 2025, will have 90 days from either the actual notice of formation or public announcement, whichever comes first, to file.

- Businesses established on or after January 1, 2025, will have 30 days from notification or public announcement of their formation to submit their first report to FinCEN.
- Businesses must submit any corrections or updates to previously filed information within 30 days.

Businesses will not incur a fee for submitting their reports, and electronic forms are available on FinCEN's website: <https://www.fincen.gov/boi>.

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Grow This! Throwdown Challenges West Virginians to Grow Vegetables and Enjoy a More Healthy Lifestyle

Earlier this year, WVNLA received a funding request to sponsor an award in the WVU Extension Service's wildly successful Grow This! Throwdown 2024. Our board of directors voted to sponsor the third-place prize of \$5,000. The winning county extension office receives the award to use toward a community project.

Started in 2018, the Grow This: West Virginia Garden Challenge's concept was simple. Many West Virginians live in food deserts with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables. This program aimed to partially close that gap by encouraging families to grow their own food, through providing free seeds and gardening education. The program aimed to get West Virginians to move more, grow their own food and decrease hunger in the state.

For the first few years, only a few hundred participants signed up. But interest exploded in 2020 as COVID lockdowns left many West Virginians stuck at home, looking for a new hobby and worried about food supply chains. Participants requested and received seeds. The 2024 seeds were scarlet Nantes carrots, red Russian kale and Jimmy Nardello peppers. More than 90,000 people participated in the 2024 competition, which awarded counties points for participants' production, activities and produce donations.

The competition was spirited. The winning counties were announced on Nov. 14.

First place (\$10,000) went to Preston County.

Second place (\$7,500) went to Pocahontas County.

Third place (\$5,000) went to Berkeley County.

WVNLA president Bobby Gompers was on hand to present the check to a very enthusiastic group of third place winners in Martinsburg.

Highlights of Berkeley County's accomplishments include:



Bobby Gompers, right, presents the third place check to the Berkeley County Grow This! Challenge team.

- starting four new seed libraries in their county,
- reporting 138 pounds of freshly harvested produce, and
- creating an edible landscape at the Martinsburg Garden of Promise.

The 2024 competition has concluded, but the folks at Grow This! Throwdown encourage everyone to get involved in 2025. "If you'd like to get involved in the Grow This! Throwdown next year, just make sure you're following us on Facebook and on Instagram (@growthiswv). There will be more grant funding up for grabs next year, and you can help your county climb its way to the top," they say.

WVNLA was pleased to sponsor the award and support a fun and educational competition.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN *Continued from page 1.*

Lastly, as we head into the holiday season, I wish you and your loved ones all the best. May this time of the year bring you joy, peace, relaxation and time to spend with those who matter most.

Thank you again for being part of the West Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association.

Bobby Gompers is WVNLA president and owns Highland Landscaping and Highland Nursery in Buckhannon.

WVNLA Winter Events

- Feb. 10** Board Meeting, 2 p.m.
- Feb. 11** Annual Members Breakfast Meeting, 8:30 a.m. & Winter Symposium, 9:30 a.m.
- Feb. 12** Pesticide Applicators Recertification, 8:30 am,
- Feb. 12** Certified Professional Horticulturist exam, 3:30 p.m.

All events will be held at the Embassy Suites in Charleston.

WVNLA Person of the Year Nominations are Open

As we head into the home stretch of 2024, perhaps you can think of a WVNLA member who deserves special recognition. If so, please nominate him or her for WVNLA's Person of the Year award, which will be presented at our Members Annual Meeting/Breakfast on Feb. 11 preceding the Winter Symposium.

The annual award celebrates someone who made an outstanding contribution to our organization or to the green industry in general.

Recipients from the previous five years are:

- 2024** **Steve Saunders** for leadership on outdoor recreation area at the Cabell-Wayne Association of the Blind
- 2023** **Dave Hill** for his design and work on outdoor recreation area at the Cabell-Wayne Association of the Blind
- 2022** **Michael Biafore** for his leadership in workforce development initiatives
- 2021** No award during pandemic
- 2020** **Norman Cole II** for his influential leadership in WVNLA's earliest days, then known as WV Nurserymen's Association.

It's easy to nominate someone. Just email wvnlassoc@gmail.com and provide the name of the person you are nominating and the reason you think he or she is deserving.

Or contact Julie Robinson at 304-553-1234 to discuss your nomination.



David Hill (right) presents the 2024 Person of the Year award to Steve Saunders.



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WVNLA NEWS

P. O. Box 20284

Charleston, WV 25362

Dates to Note

Jan. 8-10	Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show, Baltimore
Jan. 9	WVNLA Members Breakfast at MANTS, Baltimore, 8 a.m.
Feb. 10	WVNLA Board Meeting, Charleston, 2 p.m.
Feb. 11	WVNLA Winter Symposium and Annual Members Breakfast Meeting, Charleston
Feb. 12	Pesticide Applicator's Recertification session, Charleston
Feb. 12	Certified Professional Horticulturist Exam, Charleston



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