

## President's Message

As we approach the close of a very busy summer, I want to take a moment to reflect on what has been



Bobby Gompers  
WVNLA President

a productive and inspiring season for our association and the green industry across the region.

First, I want to thank everyone who helped make our *Landscape Plants for West Virginia* books

such a success. Your efforts ensured these valuable resources landed in the hands of professionals and homeowners alike. The books continue to be a vital tool, encouraging good choices for landscaping plants.

We were proud to donate a beautiful sugar maple to be planted on the West Virginia State Capitol this summer. This act was more than one of beautification—it was a demonstration of our commitment to the people of West Virginia. We received glowing publicity across the state, which can only raise the profile of this association and industry.

Be sure to set aside Feb. 18 as a date you'll want to be in Charleston for our Winter Symposium and Annual Member's Breakfast Meeting. In addition to hearing from fantastic speakers, you'll enjoy catching up with colleagues and industry news. This year we've added a Meet & Greet the night before, providing even more chances to connect.

Please see *PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE* on page 7.

## Capitol Legacy Continues

When he read last spring that a stately tree on West Virginia's Capitol grounds in Charleston was severely damaged and would need to be replaced, Mark Springer thought it would be a good idea for WVNLA to donate a replacement. Springer, who owns Lavalette Landscaping in Lavalette, and has been on WVNLA's board for many years as had his father before him, remembered that the Association had planted a tree on the Capitol grounds in 1989 to commemorate the WVNLA's 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary.

The board members agreed with Springer's idea and approved the purchase. Carles Farley, grounds supervisor for the Capitol, was pleased with the offer and requested a large sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), the state's official tree, to be provided as soon as possible. The tree was procured through Rusty Oak



The 20-foot *Acer saccharum* is transported to its new home flanking the West Virginia Capitol building.



Capitol grounds employees stand ready to lower the tree into the prepared hole.

Nursery in northern Ohio, as it was unavailable from an in-state provider, and planted Aug. 13 near the Attorney General's entrance to the Capitol.

"This sugar maple will serve as a symbol of WVNLA's commitment to beautifying our state and setting an example for doing something significant that

Please see *CAPITOL TREE* on page 4.

## Adaline Cumpston Awarded Longenecker Scholarship

Adaline Cumpston, who graduated from John Marshall High School (JMHS) in May, was selected as the 2025 George W. Longenecker Scholarship winner. Adaline is in her first semester as a horticulture major at West Virginia University. WVLNA established the Longenecker Scholarship in 2024 to encourage graduating high school seniors to apply for and enroll in the landscape architecture or horticulture programs at West Virginia University's Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design.

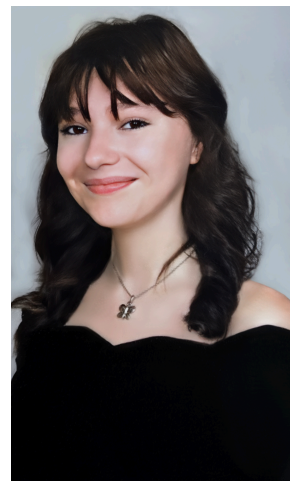
The program offers recipients full tuition reimbursement for four semesters while they maintain a 3.0 grade point average with full-time credits in either the landscape architecture or horticulture programs.

In addition to her impressive high school credentials, which included many AP and dual credit courses, Adaline was active in the JMHS FFA and 4-H. She said the time she spent working in the school's greenhouse helped hone her objectives. "I realized that I needed to focus on refining my skills rather than just learning the business side of things. I want to be hands-on and take pride in growing my own plants, not outsource the work. I also think it's important for women to get involved in careers in STEM, especially in fields like horticulture that are still mostly male-dominated," Adaline said.

"We congratulate Adaline on the scholarship and welcome her into the nursery and landscape field. The scholarship is an opportunity for our association to invest in the future of our profession and a way to honor a man who was instrumental in establishing a landscape architecture program at West Virginia University," said Julie Robinson, WVNLA executive director.

George Longenecker dedicated a lifetime to the study and mentorship of landscape architecture and horticulture. He was instrumental in developing the landscape architecture program at West Virginia University, where he was beloved by his students and fellow faculty members for his personality and knowledge of plant materials. He founded and led the effort to organize and establish the West Virginia Botanic Garden in Morgantown.

We wish Adaline the very best as she launches her collegiate career.



Adaline Cumpston

## Marcus Rennix Scholarship Deadline Approaches

Do you know a collegiate junior or senior majoring in horticulture, landscape architecture or greenhouse management? Please make them aware that they may be eligible for consideration as a Marcus Rennix scholar. The \$5,000 scholarship is open to West Virginia residents who have completed at least half of the course work in an accredited program. Applicants must have a minimum 2.5 grade point average and provide an application letter, letter of reference, and transcripts.

For more information on the scholarship, please visit our website [wvnla.org](http://wvnla.org). Application deadline is September 30.

*The 2025 Marcus Rennix scholars were introduced and honored at WVNLA's Winter Symposium in February. From left, Alaira Hudson, Penelope Edwards, Chelsea Elliott, Sam Glazier and Hailey Lane.*







## You're Invited!

### WVNLA Meet & Greet

October 21, 6 - 9 p.m.

Pipestem State Park Lodge

We had a great time July 15 connecting with our Eastern Panhandle members and colleagues, pictured on this page. It's your turn now, southern West Virginia!

Talk shop (or not!); learn more about WVNLA's activities, initiatives and membership opportunities; and relax while you enjoy drinks and hors d'oeuvres on us.

Feel free to bring colleagues. There is no cost to attend, but please email [wvnlassoc@gmail.com](mailto:wvnlassoc@gmail.com) to register so we can provide Pipestem with an accurate guest count.



Upper left: Brenda Lily, board members Bud Cottrill and John Jett chat with guests in the foreground; Michael Biafore and Julie Robinson (both center) welcome Bill Van Tol and Brandon Smallwood.



Above, WVNLA vice president Jason Testman (left) chats with a Martinsburg garden center owner; Below right, WVNLA board member Stephen Saunders talks with Martinsburg High School instructor Derek Gallagher; and left, Diana Springer speaks with WVNLA board members Dave Hill and Michael Biafore (L to R).





## Destructive Box Tree Moth Gains a Foothold in WV

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) has confirmed the presence of the Box Tree Moth (*Cydalima perspectalis*) in Berkeley, Jefferson and Morgan counties, marking the first detection of the invasive pest in the state. Native to East Asia, the Box Tree Moth (BTM) feeds primarily on boxwood plants (*Buxus* species), a popular ornamental shrub widely used in landscapes across West Virginia.



Since its initial detection in North America near Lake Ontario in 2021, the pest has rapidly spread and is now confirmed in Delaware, Massachusetts, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

### CAPITOL TREE (Continued from page 1)

will positively impact the environment and people for many years,” Springer said.

The tree was delivered on a sweltering afternoon, where Capitol grounds employees had prepared a large hole. Board members Mark Springer, Bud Cottrill and Lisa McDavid were on hand to watch as the tree was carefully lowered into the hole.



From left, Bud Cottrill, Julie Robinson, Mark Springer and Lisa McDavid.

While he waited for the tree’s arrival, Springer wandered the grounds and found the substantial sugar maple he remembered WVNLA planting 35 years ago. He saw no sign of an identifying plaque, but Mark is confident he remembered the tree’s location.

Visitors should have no problem locating Capitol’s newest sugar maple, as it stands sentry at the southeast entrance (known as the Attorney General’s entrance), soon to have a large plaque at its base.

“This pest poses a serious threat to boxwood plants, which are foundational elements in many residential and



commercial landscapes,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. “Early detection is critical, and we’re asking homeowners and landscapers to keep an eye out and report any suspicious damage.”

BTM larvae feed on the leaves and bark of boxwoods, potentially causing complete defoliation and plant death. The lime-green caterpillars are small and difficult to detect in early stages, often blending in with foliage. Infestations may not be noticeable until significant damage has occurred. Signs of infestation include:

- Chewed or missing leaves
- Presence of small green caterpillars
- Webbing on or inside the plant
- Bark stripping in advanced stages

The pest can produce multiple generations per year, compounding the damage if left untreated.

If caught early, BTM can be effectively managed with treatment options such as *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki* (Btk), a naturally derived pesticide safe for use on boxwoods and available at many garden centers. Multiple insecticides labeled for BTM control may also be effective. Always read and follow all pesticide label instructions.

Anyone who suspects their boxwoods may be affected by Box Tree Moth is encouraged to contact the WVDA immediately for confirmation and treatment guidance.

Contact the WVDA at: 304-558-2212 or [bugbusters@wvda.us](mailto:bugbusters@wvda.us).



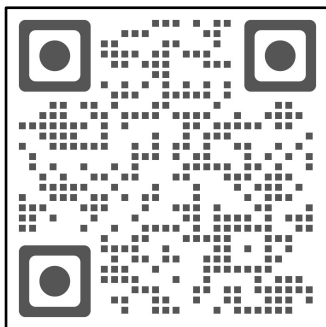


# Help Yourself and Colleagues Through Membership

Are you ready to cultivate your connections and reap the rewards? We've extended the deadline on our **Membership Drive** and are offering prizes of \$750, \$500, and \$250 to the top three current WVNLA members who recruit new members. This is a great opportunity to grow our community of landscapers, maintenance companies, growers, garden centers, nurseries, horticulturalists, educational institutions, suppliers, vendors and equipment providers. The prizes:

\$750 to the member who recruits the most new members (more than five);  
\$500 to the member who recruits the second most new members (more than three); and

\$250 to the member who recruits the third most new members (more than two).



Simply reach out to the potential members you know, and have them scan the QR code (left) to become a member on the spot and receive buy-one, get-one-year-free memberships. That's a lot of benefits in two years for \$35! Or they can visit **wvnla.org** to join.

Either way, they will need to register as a new user.

New members are vital to the future growth of our organization and collaboration of efforts. Deadline for new members to apply and count toward your drive total is December 31. Don't let this chance wilt away.

## Demand was High for *Landscape Plants for West Virginia*

We distributed the last of our *Landscape Plants for West Virginia* guide books in August. That makes 5,000 copies in circulation, and we couldn't meet the demand of a few distributors. Several of them called for replacements, saying their customers requested them. "Everyone is loving them. They are disappointed if we don't have them," said an employee at Gritt's Farm at Capitol Market in Charleston.



Thank you to our WVNLA member garden centers that distributed the books. We are out of publication, but are working on a revised version for 2026 with updated listings and information. We'll keep you posted.

At left, Kim Jackson opens a box of books to be given out to customers at Kim's Greenhouse in Milton. At right, the books were particularly popular with patrons of Gritt's Farm at Capitol Market in Charleston.



### SAVE THE DATE

**WVNLA's 2026 Winter Symposium  
Annual Members Breakfast Meeting**

**February 18**

**Embassy Suites, Charleston**

### CPH Congratulations

Congratulations to **Skylar Welch**, who earned his credentials as a Certified Professional Horticulturist when he passed the exam on July 9. Skylar is Foreman/ Meadow Specialist with Native Havens, LLC in Kearneysville.



Skylar Welch, CPH

# WVNLA Welcomes Our Newest Members

## All In One Landscapes

*Active member*


Nick Jones

7 Quarry Lane

Reedsville, WV 26547

304-276-0363

allinonelandscapes@gmail.com

*Landscape architect or designer, landscape construction and maintenance, irrigation, snow removal* 

## Andrew's Lawn Care, LLC

*Active member*


Andrew Guthrie

260 Maple Road

Hurricane, WV 25526

304-561-7345

andrewslawncarelle2016@gmail.com

*Landscape and lawn maintenance, fertilization and weed control, hardscape design and installation, snow removal* 

## Growmentum

*Active member*

Drew Lytton

1 Riddle Court

Morgantown, WV 26505

304-923-7359

drew@growmentum.io

www.growmentum.io/

*Technology/software solutions*

## Helena Agri-Enterprises, LLC

*Associate member*

Bethany Worst

312 Seneca Lane

Evans City, PA 16033

724-538-3304

worstb@helenaagri.com

helenaagri.com

*Industry supplier – wholesale chemicals and nutritional supplier.*

## Pete Dye Golf Club

*Active member*

Jason Hollen

801 Aaron Smith Drive

Bridgeport, WV 26330

304-997-9147

jhollen@petedye.com

petedye.com

*Golf course management*



## Pittsburgh WM Group dba Weed Man

*Associate member*

Connnor McKeel

700 Millers Run Road

P.O. Box 461

Cuddy, PA 15301

412-307-3650

Pittsburgh.weedman.com

*Landscape and lawn maintenance*

## Robert Miller

*Individual Professional member*

280 John Rissler Road

Charles Town, WV 25414

681-389-9709

bert81287014@gmail.com

## Brandon Smallwood

*Individual Professional member*

82 Persimmon Pear Lane

Harpers Ferry, WV 25425

703-635-6971

brandon\_smallwood@navyfederal.org

## Southern States Marshall County Co-op

*Active member*

David Voithofer

400 11<sup>th</sup> Street

Moundsville, WV 26041

304-215-0176

david.voithofer@sscoop.com

Facebook.com/marshallcountycoop

*Retail garden center*



## Tim's Landscaping

*Active member*

Tim Clemmer

992 Snake Hill Road

Morgantown, WV 26508

tim@timslandscaping.online/

www.timslandscaping.online/

*Landscape architect, landscape construction, hardscape design and installation, landscape lighting, industry materials or services provider, snow removal*

## Valley View Lawn

*Active member*

Terry Nicholson

P.O. Box 356

Pennsboro, WV 26415

304-871-916

valleyviewlawn@proton.me

*Landscape and lawn maintenance*



## Summer Meetings and Picnics Featured in Association's Early Days

*In celebration of WVNLA's 85 years of service to its members and to the people of West Virginia, we're combing the archives to paint a picture of the Association's early operations.*

Summer meetings and family picnics were a regular feature of the (then) West Virginia Nurserymen's Association when they met for their twelfth summer in 1950. The day's agenda on that Aug. 11 included a picnic and tour of Cole Nurseries, then located in Bluefield, VA. The hosts were Norman and Margaret Cole, owners of the nursery. Norman's grandson, Norman Cole III, is the current owner of Cole Nurseries.

A description of the event reads, "The picnic will be held rain or shine. There will be room indoors for everyone and we have movies and some games in case of rain. The Coles have quite a reputation as a song-and-dance team. If someone would ask them, in all probability, they would entertain us."

Twenty three members representing 16 nurseries attended. Of the nurseries listed, only one remains in operation today: Cole Nurseries.

The August 1949 summer meeting was held at the Tygart Hotel in Elkins, and members heard

presentations on landscaping, plant diseases and business conditions, according to an article in the Aug. 20 Elkins Inter-Mountain. After the business meeting, members traveled to Stuart Recreation area for a picnic sponsored by Puzzell Nursery. In those pre-karaoke days, "Miss Dorothy Talbott and Miss Caroline Darkey of the Randolph County 4-H Club led the group in singing old and popular ballads," the article added.

New officers were elected at the 1950 summer meeting.

They included, (left to right) seated, J.W.

Young, Hans

Dieckmann,

(standing) Marvin

Barnes, Waldo Craig,

and Norman H. Cole.



## Help Us Share Your Good News on Social Media

In a world where connection is everything, sharing the stories, successes and news of our members has never been more important. Social media is a vibrant hub where ideas flourish, voices are amplified, and communities are brought closer together. That is why we are reaching out to you to help us shine a spotlight on the people and projects of which you and your company are proud.

This is your opportunity to share news, projects, employee recognition or anything you believe deserves the attention of a wider audience. We find that "Before & After" photos of projects are particularly arresting.

WVNLA is on Facebook and LinkedIn. We'd love to share your good news! Email photos and information to wvnlassoc@gmail.com and we'll amplify your message.

And if you haven't followed us on Facebook and LinkedIn, what's stopping you?



**MANTS**<sup>®</sup>  
MID-ATLANTIC NURSERY TRADE SHOW

January 7-9, 2026

Baltimore Convention Center

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Continued from page 1*

Let's continue the momentum. I encourage each of you to share your knowledge, support your peers, and take pride in the role you play in shaping healthier, greener spaces across West Virginia and beyond.

Wishing you a strong finish to the season.

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

# WVNLA NEWS

P. O. Box 20284

Charleston, WV 25362

## Dates to Note

- |          |                                                                                |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Oct. 21  | Southern WV Meet & Greet,<br>Pipestem State Park, 6 p.m.                       |
| Oct. 22  | WVNLA Board Meeting,<br>Pipestem State Park, 10 a.m.                           |
| Jan. 7-9 | Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade<br>Show, Baltimore, MD                              |
| Feb. 17  | *WVNLA Board Meeting<br>*Member Meet & Greet                                   |
| Feb 18   | *WVNLA Winter Symposium<br>*Annual Members Breakfast                           |
| Feb. 19  | *Pesticide Education Session<br>*Certified Professional<br>Horticulturist exam |

*\*Events held at the Embassy Suites, Charleston.*



## Officers & Board of Directors

### *President:*

Robert Gompers – bgompers@aol.com

### *Vice President:*

Jason Testman – valleygardensjt@gmail.com

### *Secretary/Treasurer:*

Mark Springer – mark@lavalette.net

### *Past President:*

Stephen Saunders – saunders801@aol.com

### *Board Members:*

Michael Biafore – michael@biafore.com

Pat Biafore – patrick@biafore.com

Bud Cottrill – westvirginiabud@yahoo.com

Zach Crede – zach@credelawncare.com

David Hill – davidhill.threetrees@gmail.com

John Jett – drjohnjett@gmail.com

Lisa McDavid – lisasgardenscapes@yahoo.com

Betsy Raynes – betsyraynes@yahoo.com

### *Executive Director:*

Julie Robinson – wvnlassoc@gmail.com