



# HAH Happenings

## December 2025



The Horticultural Alliance of the Hamptons  
P.O. Box 202, Bridgehampton, NY 11932-0202

631.537.2223 [hahgarden.org](http://hahgarden.org)  
at the Bridgehampton Community House



**On Sunday, December 14, 2025 at 2:00 pm**

Please join us at the Bridgehampton Community House  
for a talk by **Stephen Searl** on  
**From Provisioning Plantation to Nonprofit,  
the Transformation of Historic Sylvester Manor**

Executive Director Stephen Searl will discuss the layered and rich history of Sylvester Manor and its ongoing transformation from private estate to public facing nonprofit.

The lands of Shelter Island's Sylvester Manor were home for millennia to indigenous Manhasset People. The 236-acre site is the most intact remnant of a former slaveholding plantation north of Virginia. Known today as Sylvester Manor, the site was home to eleven generations of Sylvester descendants, from 1652 until 2014, when it was gifted to the nonprofit organization Sylvester Manor Educational Farm. Over the past 370 years, Sylvester Manor has been a provisioning plantation, an Enlightenment-era farm, and a pioneering food industrialist's summer estate; and today includes the 1737 Manor House, a restored 19th-century windmill, an Afro-Indigenous Burial Ground, a working farm, and educational and cultural arts programs open to all. Sylvester Manor was designated a Historic District of national significance on the National Register of Historic Places in 2015. For more information, visit [www.sylvestermanor.org](http://www.sylvestermanor.org).

Stephen Searl has been Executive Director of Sylvester Manor for 8 years and has nearly 25 years of experience in nonprofit management, board governance, fundraising, historic preservation, land and natural resource conservation, program development, and community outreach. A native of the North Fork, Stephen grew up working in his family's business, Wickham's Fruit Farm in Cutchogue, New York. Stephen graduated from Cornell University's School of Agriculture and Life Sciences and received a Master of Science degree from the University of Vermont in Natural Resource Planning. He has held positions at various conservation organizations on Long Island over the years, including Peconic Land Trust (Southampton) and the North Shore Land Alliance (Oyster Bay). While at Peconic Land Trust, he worked closely with Eben Ostby and Bennett Konesni, family descendants of Sylvester Manor, to form the existing non-profit, start the farm, and preserve the property. He also has a private consulting business where he works with numerous land owners on conservation, land-use planning, agriculture, and real estate throughout the East End of Long Island.

Stephen currently lives in Jamesport with his three sons.

### HOLIDAY PARTY

**The Annual HAH Holiday Party begins right after the 2:00 pm lecture (read above) on Sunday, December 14, 2025. We ask that all members attending bring a dish of finger food - either sweet or savory. Please be sure it is covered and ready to serve. As always, wine, apple cider, coffee and tea will be provided.**

**Please come and enjoy the company of fellow members!!**



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As we approach the end of 2025, I'm happy to report that HAH has had another fun, enlightening, productive year. Much of our programming for 2026 is already lined up—it's not too soon to mark your calendar for the May 15 Garden Fair Preview Party!

The membership grew to over 400 for the first time ever in 2024 and has risen slightly more this year. We're an all volunteer organization, so members are literally everything to HAH. Our Board and Committees are a prime example of this—dedicated, creative, hardworking—as is everyone who volunteers for particular occasions and tasks like the Garden Fair, Garden Fair Digs, Yard Sale, Library, Lectures, Marie Donnelly Garden. Thank all y'all for everything you do, and for making doing it so much fun!

Thank you Nancy Gilbert and David Reese for joining our 2026 HAH Board of Directors. A huge shoutout and thank you to Pat Matheson, our retiring Treasurer, and Kathie McGinty, our retiring Board Member. Thank you both for all you've done—and for all of the warmth and good humor you've added to the Board.

Lastly, don't miss out on 2026 HAH fun by forgetting to renew. Go to [www.hahgarden.org/join-us](http://www.hahgarden.org/join-us) to renew faster than a deer eating a hosta.

Michael Longacre



## HAH 2025 Officers and Board of Directors

### OFFICERS: (an officer serves for a 1 year term)

President	Michael Longacre
First Vice President	Greg Wiseman
Second Vice President	Bettina Benson
Recording Secretary	Janet Donohoe Ollinger
Corresponding Secretary	Marie DiMonte
Treasurer	Patricia Matheson

### DIRECTORS: (a director serves for a 3 year term)

Pamela Harwood	'25
Erik Brockmeyer	'25
Kathy McGinty	'26
Alex Sipkes	'26
Laurie Gibbs	'27
Olivia Motch	'27

The Library Chairperson (who serves on the Board with a vote) is Joan DiMonda.

On occasion the board may appoint someone to fill an unexpired term if necessary.

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR** - Elaine Peterson

**WEBSITE EDITOR** - Michael Longacre

**MEMBERSHIP & MAILING** - Bettina and John Benson

**PHOTOS** this month: Pamela Harwood, Michael Longacre, Elaine Peterson

## December Events at HAH

**Saturday, Dec. 6, 10 am, Roundtable, see p. 4**

**Sunday, Dec. 14, 2 pm, Lecture and Annual Party, see p. 1**

**Saturday, Dec. 20, Winter Book Group, 11 am, on Zoom, see p. 3**

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Olivia Motch	'27
Greg Wiseman	'28
David Reese	'28

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## HELP DECORATE for the HOLIDAY PARTY!



Why not attend the Decorating Party as well as the Holiday Party?  
Volunteers are needed to help set up for the annual Holiday Party on December 14th  
beginning at 11:00 a.m.

Please come with your gloves and a pair of clippers!

Also needed: Vases of any size (these will be returned). Cuts of evergreens, needled or broadleaf. Other beautiful long boughs of berries or greens are needed as well. Small and large branches are welcome.

We are grateful for as much material as you are able to give.

I hope to see you there! Lori Barnaby

## WINTER BOOK GROUP IS BACK!

Please join your fellow bibliophiles for an hour of relaxing, informative and fun book reviews.

Saturday, December 20th 11AM-Noon On Zoom.

Please watch your email for the Zoom link.

1. Roses in the Garden by Ngoc Minh Ngo, presented by Carleen Borsella
2. Hot Plants for Cool Climates: Gardening with Tropical Plants in Temperate Zones,  
by Susan A. Roth and Dennis Schrader, presented by Derek Scolino
3. The Backyard Parables: Lessons on Gardening, and Life, by Margaret Roach,  
presented by Laurie Gibbs

Save the dates for all of our upcoming Book Groups  
(the third Saturday of the Month)

January 17th

February 21st

March 21st



## 🌿 REMINDER 🌿

Please note that if you do not renew your membership this will be your final newsletter.

Think about giving a GIFT of a HAH membership to a friend or colleague who loves plants and gardening. Play Santa!! Head to our website now for an easy online renewal or new order for a friend. Go to [hahgarden.org/join-us](http://hahgarden.org/join-us). We may be the only bargain in the HAMPTONS anymore so don't forget to give a gift of HAH in addition to renewing, if you haven't already! **THANK YOU!**





# HAH Roundtable Program

In Person at the HAH Library

Saturday, December 6, 2025 at 10:00am – Noon

## Putting the Garden to Bed for the Winter:

Many Options as well as Last Call for Necessary Details

Moderated and with Photos by Pamela Harwood

As I'm writing this in mid-November, the garden is still glorious and far from dormant: most trees and shrubs still have plentiful leaves with striking foliage and there are perennials, annuals, and shrubs in bloom! So, although we've begun certain clean up tasks, I realize that we will wait until December this year to finally "put the garden to bed." Both new gardeners as well as experienced gardeners are now reading and hearing differing advice as to what we should do or not do in our gardens to not only deal with fallen leaves, but to tidy our gardens and otherwise prepare for the winter months. HAH to the rescue! It's a perfect time to get together and share ideas about the pros and cons of various approaches. And there are also certain tasks that everyone agrees must be done now to save plants for next year and to keep your garden healthy.

- Should we leave everything in place to **provide shelter for pollinators?**
- How much should we clean up to avoid harboring **voles, moles, other rodents, and fungal diseases?**
- Is there a middle ground, and if so,
  - **What to selectively cut back now and why**
  - **What to leave in place until spring and why**
- **What to bring inside** for overwintering
- **Pruning:** we'll describe the various tasks that fall under this umbrella term, what to do now, and what should or might wait until spring
- **Dividing and Transplanting**
- Which plants should I leave for **winter interest?**
- **Fallen leaves:** how to put them to work in your garden instead of throwing them away
- **Composting:** the ultimate garden recycler and what to add or not add
- **Collecting and saving seeds:** a how-to primer
- **Protecting Evergreens and some woody shrubs** (particularly natives, as we're discovering)
- **Winterizing garden hoses, irrigation, birdbaths, planters, furniture, and ornamental features**
- **Fertilizing and mulching**
- **Garden tools that make it all easier**
- **Bonus share: how to decorate for the holidays with items gathered from your own garden!**

Sometimes the answers are clear - such as what not to prune now so you don't lose spring blooms, and which plants should be removed if you don't wish them to rampantly self-seed - and other times the answers are not so clear, according to one's own aesthetics and goals. We welcome all samples for show and tell. By the end of the program, if there are attendees who have additional gardening questions about these or any other topics, please feel free to stay a while longer and talk to one of our knowledgeable members.





**HAH** is sad indeed to report the recent passing of two of our highly regarded members who, each in their own way, supported our organization for decades.



**Jean Coakley** became a member way back in 1989 when she lived and gardened in the Springs. And even at age 96, she still kept in touch with us from her new home and garden in Bellport. She was a mentor, a teacher and instructor, and a good friend who cared about you **and** your gardening. She always had a smile for you and a helping hand and a warm wit. She guided the organization as president and board member for many years, always strengthening and extending our knowledge of how to be a useful organization to our growing community as a non-profit educational source.

HAH was proud to honor Jean at our annual Garden Fair in 2008. And here is what she wrote to us. *'The honor you paid me at the Garden Fair was certainly a highlight for me. I love this organization – it has brought me knowledge and good friends. Watching us grow, not just in number, but in*

*valuable activities and programs, has been satisfying and constantly renews my enthusiasm. The fabulous gift – Acer palmatum dissectum palmatifidum is now to be a focal point in my new garden here in Bellport. It will serve as a constant reminder of a memorable, albeit wet, evening and of my many HAH friends. Thank you, thank you.'* And we thank Jean with all our hearts for her many contributions to HAH. She passed on November 8th, no doubt still caring for plants and her friends and family.

**Dave Seeler's** achievements in the horticultural world of the East End are extraordinary in so many ways that it's hard to do them all justice in a few words. From encouraging and supporting others' work in the field, to setting the stage for an always enchanting nursery experience at the Bayberry, to an exploration and creative execution of fine garden design, he set himself high standards and met them for more than 50 years.

In a 'Hamptons' world of the ever bigger/grander house and garden, his exceptional sensitivity to the finer expression of landscape architecture and design truly stands out. And it stands out because he understood that the relationship between structure and plants is all about the feelings evoked in the humans who experience it. He facilitated space in a way that magic happened, so that people found the peace and beauty that we are always seeking. This is not easy to do, but he made it appear effortless and he did so without shining a light on himself. That is real accomplishment!

True to form, Dave was a quiet but significant supporter of HAH's efforts to build and maintain a strong community access for gardening knowledge and horticultural exploration. Still at work in his 80's he continued to be a unique inspiration to colleagues and clients. He will be greatly missed by the East End horticultural community and HAH extends our deepest condolences to his family and all at the Bayberry.



**Did you know that HAH is on the web in other ways than our website? Follow us on**

**[www.facebook.com/HAHgarden](https://www.facebook.com/HAHgarden)**

**[www.instagram.com/horticulturalalliancehamptons](https://www.instagram.com/horticulturalalliancehamptons)**



## Check Out Books in the HAH John LoGerfo Library

The HAH John LoGerfo Library has over 3,000 books related to every possible aspect of horticulture. Old and new, they can be checked out by members on Tuesdays, Saturdays (10am -12 noon) and (usually) during the coffee and cookies reception after the monthly lecture.

If there's a book you've heard of, or an author you enjoy, you can search the collection online from the comfort of your own home (or phone). Go to <https://hahgarden.org/library/> and click on the link at the top of the page that will take you to the search.

## Laurel Wilt Discovered in Suffolk County

In early September New York State agencies and the Cornell Extension confirmed the invasive plant disease laurel wilt on Long Island, marking its first discovery in New York State. Originating in Asia and first identified in the U.S. in Georgia in 2002, the disease is deadly to plants in the Laurel family, and has previously been found in several southeastern states. The Suffolk County case originated in the village of Northport.

Laurel wilt is a fungal pathogen that kills trees and shrubs in the laurel family that is spread by the invasive redbay ambrosia beetle. In New York, native species at risk are sassafras and spicebush. Despite its name, mountain laurel is not in the same family, so not impacted by the disease.

The loss of sassafras and spicebush could have wide-ranging impacts on New York's forests and wildlife. Both species provide food and shelter for birds, pollinators, and mammals. Spicebush berries are a critical fall food source for migratory birds and the leaves of both spicebush and sassafras support the larvae of native butterflies.

Laurel wilt causes rapid decline in sassafras and spicebush. Signs and symptoms to look for include: sudden wilting of leaves; dark streaking of sapwood beneath the bark; small entry holes on the branches, trunk, or roots. Members of the public who encounter symptomatic sassafras and spicebush can submit a report at [nyimainvasives.org](http://nyimainvasives.org)



Branches, trunks, or bark from symptomatic sassafras or spicebush should not be removed from their location. Chipping dead wood to use as mulch on-site is recommended. People often use wood from trees that have died on their property as firewood when they go camping, which can allow invasive pests and diseases to spread long-distance so it is to be avoided.

Michael Longacre

## OTHER LOCAL GARDEN EVENTS DECEMBER 2025

- **Fridays December 5, 12, 19 and Saturdays December 6, 13, 20, 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm. LongHouse Illuminated.** LongHouse Reserve, 133 Hands Creek Road, East Hampton, NY 11937. \$35 for members, \$45 non-members. For more info and to register: <https://longhouse.org/products/longhouse-illuminated-1>
- **Saturday, December 6, 10 am to 12:30 pm. Holiday Wreaths with Lilee Fell.** Landcraft Garden Foundation, 4342 Grand Avenue, Mattituck, NY 11952. \$135 for members, \$150 non-members. For more info and to register: [landcraftgardenfoundation.org/upcoming-lectures/](http://landcraftgardenfoundation.org/upcoming-lectures/)
- **Sunday, December 7, 10 am to 11 am. Wreath Making Workshop.** Marders, 120 Snake Hollow Road, Bridgehampton, NY 11932. \$125 for adults, \$85 for children; all materials provided. Prepaid reservations required and space is limited. For more info and to register: [marders.com/events](http://marders.com/events)
- **Thursday, December 11, 2:00 pm. Garden Conservancy Virtual Program: Sleepy Cat Farm, Part IV - Planning and Perfecting with the Future in Mind.** \$5 for members, \$15 non-members. For more info and to register: <https://www.gardenconservancy.org/events/web25-sleepy-cat-farm-part-iv-12-11-2025>
- **Saturday, December 13, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Merry Madoo.** Madoo Conservancy, 618 Sagg Main Street, Sagaponack, NY 11962. FREE. For more info: [madoo.org](http://madoo.org)
- **Sunday, December 14, 10 am to 11 am. Boxwood Tree Making Class.** Marders, 120 Snake Hollow Road, Bridgehampton, NY 11932. \$125 for adults, \$85 for children; all materials provided. Prepaid reservations required and space is limited. For more info and to register: [marders.com/events](http://marders.com/events)

### Spotlight on the Library...

Our HAH Garden Yard Sale was again a huge success. Cleaning out your sheds, garages, basements and attics provided a wide assortment of interesting and unusual items for us to sell. Thank you so much for taking the time to do that.

To everyone who purchased, we thank you for supporting the sale. We got caught up in your enthusiasm and enjoyed seeing your excitement and happiness. Our community spirit is alive and well!

It takes a team effort to prepare and clean up from the sale and with that thought in mind, and with great appreciation, I extend an immense thank you to Michael Longacre, Erik Brockmeyer, Janis Murphy, Lydia Wallis, Charlie Savage, Joan Wilson, Ed DiMonda, Adrienne Woodduck, Wendy Moonan, Laurie Gibbs, and Bill and Jennifer Winkler. See you all next year!

Joan DiMonda, Library Chair

Reminder: The HAH LoGerfo Library is open Saturday and Tuesday mornings from 10:00 -12:00 throughout the year. You may also request an appointment for an alternate time to visit the collection.



**HAH Sunday Lecture Program - 2 pm**  
**At the Bridgehampton Community House, Main Hall**  
**2357 Montauk Highway, Bridgehampton, NY**

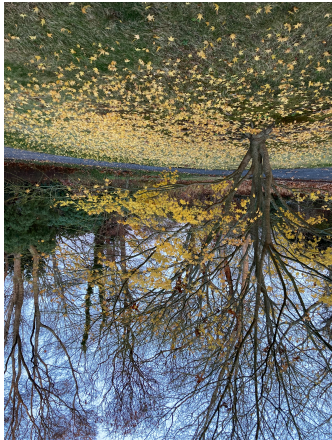
December 14	Stephen Searl - <i>From Provisioning Plantation to Nonprofit, the Transformation of Historic Sylvester Manor</i>
January 11	Gordon Hayward - <i>Garden Rooms: Ideas and Inspirations</i> (On Zoom)
February 15	C.L. Fornari - <i>Houseplant Happiness</i> (On Zoom)
March 15	Helen O'Donnell - <i>Gardening In a Changing World</i>
April 12	Leslie Duthie - <i>Native Ferns and Wildflowers for Shade Gardens</i>
May 3	Teresa Woodard - <i>Garden to the Max: Joyful, Visionary, Maximalist Design</i>
June 14	Christian Douglas - <i>The Food Forward Garden: Explore the Art and Science of Edible Landscape Design</i>
September 13	Roy Diblik - <i>Growing Plants in Communities</i>
October 18	Dr. Eve Beaury - <i>Seeding Ecosystems of the Future</i>
November 15	Michael Gibson - <i>The Gibson Method: Reimagining Topiary As Living Art</i>
December 20	Roman Roth - <i>How to Grow and Achieve World Class Vineyards Right Here on the East End</i>

Full Moon 🌕 Dec. 4 evening

New Moon 🌑 Dec. 19 evening

Last Quarter Moon 🌘 Dec. 11 afternoon

First Quarter Moon 🌒 Dec 27 afternoon



100% Recycled  
  
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