



North Shore Horticultural Society

P.O. Box 171, Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA 01944

January 2021 Volume XXIII Number 1

www.NSHorticulture.org

Meeting Location

The Zoom meeting link will be emailed to members a few days before and again the day before each meeting

Upcoming Zoom Meetings

**Thursday, Jan 28th
7:30 PM**

Garden Gate seminar
*How to Choose the Right
Plant for the Right Spot*
Kristin Beane Sullivan
and James A. Baggett

**Thursday, Feb 25th
7:30 PM**

Garden Gate seminar
Monarchs and Milkweeds
James A. Baggett

**Thursday, Mar 25th
7:30 PM**

Catherine Brown, DVM
*Ticks and Tick-Borne
Diseases in MA*
Live presentation
over Zoom

Board Meeting

Thursday, February 11th
7:00 PM

How to Choose the Right Plant for the Right Spot

Thursday, Jan 28th at 7:30 PM

This month's Zoom seminar is presented by Kristin Beane Sullivan and James Baggett of *Garden Gate* magazine. Kristin and James will show you their favorite plants for almost anything you can think of, including: clay soil, dry shade, and wet spots. Following the seminar, we will have discussion time among the attending NSHS members.

We will send an email with the link for our Zoom meeting on January 21st. We'll follow-up with a reminder email on January 27th. If we don't have your email and you want to join the Zoom meeting, please let us know:

northshorehorticulture@gmail.com

Thank you for donating to Children's Friend and Family Services of Salem

A big THANK YOU goes out to all of you who contributed to our November toy and gift collection to benefit the Children's Friend and Family Services of Salem. Your generous contributions were gratefully received and very much appreciated. Special thanks to Joan and Pete Johnson for collecting and delivering our gifts!

Winter-time

*Late lies the wintry sun a-bed,
A frosty, fiery sleepy-head;
Blinks but an hour or two; and then,
A blood-red orange, sets again.*

~ Robert Louis Stevenson

NSHS Horticulture Hall

by Norm Weeks

Americans have long had an interest in organizing around the sharing of horticultural information. The Massachusetts Horticultural Society was founded in 1829 and is America's oldest horticultural institution. The National Horticultural Society (NHS) formed in 1922, but soon merged with the American Horticultural Society (AHS) in 1926 in the interest of improving horticulture as both a science and an art form.

The North Shore Horticultural Society was founded in 1899. Its mission has been much the same as MassHort, NHS and AHS. A difference, however, has always been the nature of its support: NSHS support is more local, and a source of community for many.



Pictured here is 'Horticultural Hall' at 12 Summer Street, Manchester in 1917, the year of its opening. The Hall was built with local contributions and was home to NSHS for many years. It hosted NSHS and other public events until it was torn down in 1963.

NSHS itself has endured much in its time including two world wars, the Spanish Influenza, the Great Depression, the disco era, and now the global pandemic. We've survived. Together. And, we'll be back together for our monthly meetings just as soon as we safely can. We promise!

Horticultural Discoveries: My Auction Plants a Year Later by Dorothy Ryan

The first NSHS House Plant Auction last January was a great opportunity for me to add to my collection of indoor greenery. I was able to acquire familiar plants that I had wanted to try, plants that were replacements for those I had previously killed, and a plant that I had never heard of before. As usual, I overdid it and went home with many more additions to my collection than I had planned. All of them have survived the year under my care. Some have even thrived.

Scanning the plants about to be auctioned off, I spotted a *Sansevieria*, something I had wanted after Carol Batdorf mentioned it in her list of plants that help to purify the indoor air. I made a successful bid on it and, after doing some research, I discovered that it's a *Sansevieria zeylanica*, commonly known as Snake Plant or Mother-in-law's Tongue, a plant thought to be impossible to kill. Perfect for me! I put my little *Sansevieria* in a north window where it survived the winter and spring with minimal attention. In late spring, it joined the rest of my plants for a vacation on my southeast facing deck in a spot in the shade of the awning. There it began to send up shoots that became new leaves. By early fall, it had more than doubled in size so I had to repot it. Since then it has continued to send up new growth and to please my eye with its gray green sword-like leaves even as it improves my air quality.

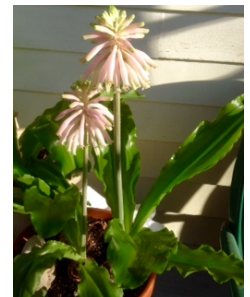


No Begonia in my care had survived for very long. I envied my friend, Ann, who has large, lush pots of venerable Begonias thriving in the windows of her old farmhouse. I wanted another chance at success, so I bid on and got three pots of Begonias, all different. One large specimen with dark green fuzzy leaves was unlabeled. One with green and brown patterned leaves was tagged as "Persian Brocade". One with shiny bronze leaves bore a label informing me that it was *Erythrophylla*, a Beefsteak Begonia, one of the oldest hybrids still in cultivation. This label also helpfully gave me some information on care: "Bright light - allow to get dry between waterings." After doing some research, I figured out that all three were *Rhizomatous Begonias*. I put them on the southeast facing window over the kitchen sink so that they could get some humidity and some winter sun. They seemed to like it there. In late spring, they joined the

Sansevieria in the shade of the awning on my deck where they continued to thrive. They outgrew their original pots by the end of summer and so would no longer fit over the kitchen sink when I brought them inside. They are now on a shelf next to a southeast facing window in my living room. I think that adequate humidity, bright shade in the summer, morning sun in the winter, and not overwatering are the keys to their survival. Although there is not so much humidity where they are now they seem to be holding their own. I'm keeping my fingers crossed.



Before the auction began, I spotted a plant with long green leaves and a pink flower spike. I knew I wanted it, whatever it was. I couldn't believe my good luck when I made the winning bid and was told by its contributor that it was a *Veltheimia* that she had acquired at a botanical garden in South Africa. When I got it home, I felt intimidated by the challenge of keeping such a rare beauty alive. As usual, I did some research and discovered that its botanical name is *Veltheimia bracteata* and that it is not fussy about growing conditions. The White Flower Farm catalogue refers to it as South African Cape Hyacinth and, indeed, I could see that each cluster of leaves sprang from a hyacinth-like bulb. No longer intimidated, I found that it really is easy to care for as well as attractive with its bright green wavy leaves, even without flowers. In late spring, out to the deck and under the awning it went. It lost its leaves as summer went by and then grew new ones. When it was time for me to bring it inside, I divided the bulbs between two pots. Now, in January, new pink flower spikes are brightening the winter gloom.



The Pandemic has temporarily brought an end to social gatherings, including our monthly NSHS meetings but I look forward to meeting mask-less and in person again for a second house plant auction when we can gather to share our plants, our knowledge, and our love of gardening.

Check out the UMass Extension virtual agricultural workshops at: <https://ag.umass.edu/fruit/news-events/mass-aggie-seminars-2021>. (Times and fees vary.)