LET NATURE DO IT

Gardening has become the number one recreational activity in the United States. More people than ever before are thinking green. There is a growing recognition that all nature is interrelated, but many people have little comprehension of how it all fits together. Remember the phrase “Think globally and act locally?” Well, it is our responsibility as members of the “green industry” to help individuals learn to do what is healthy for the environment globally and for their own backyards (literally). We, as landscape designers and horticulturists, are in the best position to offer sound, up-to-the-minute advice to our clients, whether they be individuals, institutions or municipalities. So, what are some “hot” horticultural issues we need to know about?

The first is the use of “bio-rational” agents in pest management. Eventually these agents will replace chemicals in controlling plant pests and diseases. Think of the value to the landscape when by adding a compost to a planting area you will be able to manage several of the most destructive pathogens that attack our ornamentals—no chemicals. The ability of specific organisms found in compost to suppress disease has been under study for twenty-five years. Only recently, however, has it been possible to produce a consistent product containing these bio-active agents. EarthGro, a Connecticut company that is a leader in the production of compost blends, is currently producing a disease suppressive compost. A promising development, but there is still much to be learned concerning the effectiveness of these agents under field conditions. continued on page 4

Annual Dinner Set

The BSLA Radcliffe Chapter Annual Dinner will be held Wednesday, April 24, in the Cronkhite Graduate Center. A reception, exhibition of student work, and sale of landscape books will begin at 5:00 P.M., and dinner will be served at 6:30. We anticipate another sell-out event, so make your reservations early.

This year our speaker will be Jamaica Kinkaid, the well-known author, lecturer, and garden enthusiast whose column "In The Garden" appears regularly in The New Yorker. Here’s a sample from "Homemaking" to whet your appetite:

I was so eager to [move from] my old house that I left behind some Festiva Maxima peonies that had been given to me; they were divided from a plant that was fifty years old. It is only now, when I drive by my old house in June and see them blooming, that I am filled with regret that I did not say to the people buying my house, “Yes, that price will do very well as long as I can take my Festiva Maxima, for not only are they the most beautiful of peonies but they are the first flowers I isolated and became attached to, at the moment I became a gardener.”

Come and hear more.

Thanks to increased sponsorship, ticket prices will be the same as last year: $28 for members and $33 for non-members. Space is limited and BSLA members will be given preference over non-members. Ticket sales will be announced in the next issue of Perspectives.

Many of you have generously volunteered to help with the annual dinner. More help is still needed. You might work on table centerpieces, sponsorship, student exhibits, reception, book sales or any of the other activities before or on the evening of the dinner. If you would like to help, please call Diana Thomas at (617) 484-2247. Each volunteer will be given a collection of Ms. Kinkaid’s recent columns from The New Yorker as our way of saying “Thank you!”

—Diana Thomas

1995 BSLA Professional Awards Program

The following is excerpted from the BSLA newsletter.

An unprecedented fifty projects were entered in this year’s annual BSLA Awards Program, now in its twelfth year. Many were new entrants who achieved recognition in their first time out. Reflecting nationwide trends, areas of special interest this year included gardens for healing. Sustainable design and ecological concerns continued to cast a high profile, with the further refinement of inclusion of urban areas. Representation from landscape architecture’s core areas—park and institutional design—was strong, as were entries in residential design. All in all—with a grand total of 18 award winners—it was a very good year.

BSLA president Mark Zarrillo, practitioners Paula Cortês and Mary Smith, and Department of Environmental Management landscape architect Chris Greene comprised the jury. Chair of the awards committee was John Furlong; members were Nancy Coleman, Roger Erickson, Karen Madsen, and Larry Zuelke.

Residential Design

Merit Award for Coolidge Hill Residence, Cambridge, MA, to Douglas Reed Landscape Architecture, Landscape Architect; Landscape Collaborative of New England, Landscape Contractor.

The new garden restructures the landscape around an existing house and provides a direct connection between formerly inaccessible areas of a quarter-acre site that possesses dramatic topography, long vistas, mature trees, and an adjacent wetland. The jury admired the introduction of unconven- continued on page 2
From the Editors

This month’s topic is horticulture. For many of us, it is easy to become focused on design or preservation, covered in the fall issues of Perspectives, or conservation, construction, or history. Which will be addressed in March, April, and May, and forget about the living materials which are our basic building blocks. To remind us of the importance of being knowledgeable about plants and their care, we have asked several people to share their expertise and enthusiasms with us.

Faculty member Paul Rogers talks about our responsibility to keep ourselves informed on trends in the “green industry”, and to be educational resources for our clients. Continuing the theme of education, Seminars student Louise Forrest writes about her growing love of the genus Rhododendron. Her story will be familiar to anyone who has developed a particular fondness (some would say obsession) for a specific plant. And as a way of invoking the spring, several Seminars students, graduates, and faculty tell us a bit about their favorite plant and why it appears again and again in their designs.

Also in this issue you will find an impressive list of Radcliffe faculty and student winners in the 1995 BSLA Awards Program. Special congratulations go to Julie Khuen, whose Independent Project, a master plan for the Winchester Public Library, will actually be implemented. This month’s Secret Garden, a former BSLA award winner, demonstrates how a difficult site can be made to work through the informed and sensitive use of plant materials.

We leave you with this thought: January is almost over and spring will come.

Phoebe 
Doug

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Perspectives in Landscape Design

Published by the Radcliffe Chapter Boston Society of Landscape Architects
February 1996
Volume 13 Number 4

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The copy deadline for each issue is the first Friday of the month preceding the issue date.

Radcliffe Chapter of the Boston Society of Landscape Architects 6 Ash Street Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

1995 BSLA Professional Awards

PARK DESIGN

Merit Award for East Boston Piers
Park, East Boston, MA, to Pressley Associates, Inc., Landscape Architect; SEA Consultants, Inc., Engineers; CBT/Children's Berman Tsckares, Architect; Casendino & Company, Community Liaison; M. DeMatteo Construction Company, General Contractor; Franny's Landscape Company, Landscape Subcontractor; and Massachusetts Port Authority, Client.

An abandoned commercial wharf has been replaced by rolling lawns, brick pathways, picnic tables, and shade trees on the land side and, on the harbor side, by direct waterfront access. Spectacular views are enhanced by pavilions and plantings. The jury recognized the high degree of difficulty in resolving community issues on a very tough site.

INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN

Merit Award for Therapeutic Garden for Children, Wellesley, MA, to Douglas Reed Landscape Architecture, Landscape Architect; Robert Hans Landscape Construction, Landscape Contractor; Stonehouse Construction, Grading Contractor; Institute for Child and Adolescent Development, Client.

Therapists will use this garden to study and treat behavioral disorders by observing a child's interaction with the landscape. The design expresses the "narrative" of a watercourse, linking a sequence of spaces that correspond to stages of a child's recovery. The topography of the site has been reshaped into a series of water-carved landforms: a sheltering ravine, a wooded plateau, a large open glade. The jury applauded the beautiful response to a very specific, yet abstract program.

Merit Award for Durfee Gardens, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, to Dean Cardasis, Landscape Architect; Holden Farms Nurseries, Landscape Contractor; and University of Massachusetts, Client.

continued on page 3
Why I Love Rhododendrons

For most people, the word rhododendron probably conjures up an image of a large and shiny-leaved foundation plant which blooms in May. But the genus Rhododendron includes much more. As I have fallen in love with this genus, a whole new world has opened up to me. Rhododendrons (and azaleas, which are part of the same genus) come in all sizes from ground covering mats only a few inches tall to 25 feet in this area (elsewhere they can reach 80 feet!). They include both deciduous and evergreen varieties and range in hardiness zone from 1 through 9 and in bloom time from April through August. Rhododendrons bloom in every color of the rainbow except true blue.

I particularly like the different leaf forms; some are very narrow, others oval. For example, R. williamsianum has a lovely oval shape with bell shaped flowers. I also enjoy the new growth patterns and colors of rhododendrons; some are silvery, others bright red. It is like enjoying the winter bark of flowering trees.

Having become intrigued, I joined the American Rhododendron Society (ARS) a year and half ago. Since then I have become immersed in the study of rhododendrons, learning about species and hybridizing, and propagating from cuttings and seeds. I have acquired reference books and have pored over the Van Veen order forms in pursuit of new plants. The signs of my fondness are everywhere: baby rhodies on window sills and an indoor rhody nursery made from a fish tank and Plexiglas. I knew my devotion had become total on the day in early December when my partner and I found ourselves building protective cages around some year-old plants outdoors - at night - in the rain!

In Judith Tankard’s course on the Gardens of Gertrude Jekyll, I explored the great designer’s use of rhododendrons. Jekyll liked them for effect on the edge of a path leading into the woods (Munstead Wood). She also used small, alpine rhododendrons, species with tiny leaves and dwarf forms. Her advice concerning grouping, massing, and sequence of blooms is still useful for designers today.

Rhododendrons’ tolerance for shade and preference for well-drained acid soil make them useful in places where many other plants might fail. My design clients like the rhododendrons because they are tidy and require little maintenance. And the early blooming deciduous azaleas are a knockout.

—Louise Forrest

1995 BSLA Professional Awards

In recognition of the University’s agricultural history, this contemporary park was organized on the grid of fields and orchards and made use of old existing trees. Railings of wood and red kevlar cord surround a central “Glade” and combine colored light with twining vines on translucent 18-foot trellises that support wisteria and morning glory. The jury appreciated the combination of formality and playfulness and the heightened sense of awareness the design fosters.

Communications

Merit Award for Five Views: One Landscape, A Journal of Experiments in Public Art, Cambridge, MA, to Sarah Vance, Designer; and Elizabeth McKinney, Editor, Office for the Arts at Harvard and Radcliffe, Client.

This “journal” documents a series of temporary installations commissioned to celebrate the end of a disruptive, three-year renovation of the Radcliffe Quadrangle. Three voices—artist, student, administrator—are used to illustrate the range of perspectives brought to the space and the projects. The jury praised this effort to foster understanding of a publicly used space—its site, scale, history, social implications, and relationship to its surrounds.

Projects Outside BSLA Area

Merit Award for General Management Plan and Summary of General Management Plan for Weir

More On Awards

Radcliffe faculty and students won more than one-third of the 1995 BSLA Professional Awards. The awards were presented at a banquet on January 11. Congratulations go to Marion Pressley, Douglas Reed, Sarah Vance, and to Julie Khuen and her advisor, Todd Richardson.

Laura D. Eisner won an award from the ASLA for her role in the Durfee Gardens project: Durfee Gardens, Laura D. Eisner, Plant Materials Consultant, Honor Award, 1995.

One of the best things about Julie Khuen’s master plan for the Winchester Library is that it will actually be implemented. According to Julie, the library trustees love the plan and are committed to seeing it through to completion. This winter, she will be working with Todd Richardson, her Independent Project advisor for the master plan, to complete the construction drawings and details so that the first phase can be started in the spring while the library is still closed for renovations. Her research on the work of Olmsted associate Herbert J. Kellaway, the prime architect of Winchester’s parks and open spaces, in connection with this project resulted in the first publication of his work.

—editors
Let Nature Do It

The disease control function will occur in addition to the benefits conferred by the addition of organic matter to the soil: the increase in the cation exchange capacity (ability of the soil to hold nutrients); a substantial increase in the water holding capacity of the soil; and the addition of macro- and micro-nutrients. These biological agents have low mammalian toxicity, low impact on non-target organisms, and make use of natural processes that are billions of years old and are still effective today.

The important point is that science is beginning to recognize that nature already contains many of the elements needed for the well-being and survival of our plants, ourselves, and our planet. Thus the increasing emphasis on bi-rational, rather than chemical, approaches.

The second "new" topic, species diversity, is getting attention because gardeners and growers realized that we were losing many varieties of vegetables, flowers, and herbs that had been in cultivation for hundreds or thousands of years. When it became possible to mass produce almost infinite numbers of genetically similar or identical plants, nature's balance was changed. The positive side of this was that these varieties traveled well to market; the negative side was the vulnerability of each individual plant to the same pests and diseases. Entire crops could be wiped out almost instantly. The heavy use of chemicals was about the only way to prevent this.

Now we see that "heirloom" or "heritage" seeds have much more than sentimental value: their genetic diversity enables them to adapt and survive. Thus, companies like Seed of Change in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Old Sturbridge Village, and many others are searching out both old and new varieties to offer the gardening public.

We must be aware of the trends in pest management and plant materials in order to help our clients make informed choices about what they grow and how they garden.

—Paul Rogers

What's Your Favorite Plant?

Winter is the time for dreaming about our favorite plants, now hidden by the snow. Perspectives asked some students, former students, and faculty members to tell us about theirs.

I look forward to the clear yellow blossoms of Hamamelis x intermedia 'Arnold Promise', against the snow. This witch hazel is very fragrant, flowers for about a month, and has nice yellow fall foliage as well.
—Laura D. Eisner

I like columbines (especially Aquilegia vulgaris) in urban gardens for their colorful, delicate flowers and because they can withstand the shade and dryness created by trees and their surface roots.
—Susan Juretschke

Taxus baccata and Kalmia latifolia provide a background for the golden foliage of Callicarpa japonica, the fountain-shaped shrub that produces beautiful lavender to purple berries along its stems in August.
—Ginger Nemerever

My first place winner is Perovskia atriplicifolia, called perovskia or Russian sage. Its silvery gray-green foliage harmonizes with neighbors of many different palettes, while its delicate upright branching habit always catches the eye. The long-lasting, silvery blue flowers come in late summer into fall and are a welcome contrast to the bright colors of that time of year.
—Diana L. Peck

For a city or very protected location, I like Prunus laurocerasus 'Otto Luyken' because of its compact, elegant habit. This Cherry laurel grows to 3'-4', has 4" long dark, lustrous leaves which do not curl in winter like rhododendrons, is covered in the early spring with white flowers on upright racemes, and is sweetly-scented.
—Margaret Pokorny

Taxus cuspidata 'Columnaris' is the best evergreen shrub I've found for creating a tall hedge in sun or shade. Its dark green fine texture makes a great backdrop.
—Roger Washburn

I find Fothergilla major a choice shrub for the landscape where the soil is acidic. It has a clean appearance year round, a sturdy habit, and is quite resistant to pests and disease. The delicate, fragrant, bottlebrush-like flowers have an unusual texture, and the fall colors are fantastic—numerous colors on each leaf!
—Kate Wiggins, Bonnie Ulin, Inc.

—continued on page 8
Perspectives in landscape design

Landscape events of interest FEBRUARY 1996

Radcliffe Chapter
Boston Society of Landscape Architects

Late January

27 SAT
The Historic Massachusetts Act, conference. Includes plenary session entitled: Preservation's Role in Building Community: A National, State and Local View. 9:30am-12:15pm. Faneuil Hall, Boston. HMI

February

1, 2, 3
New England Grows, conference with educational sessions and exhibits. Hynes Convention Center, Boston. 9am-5pm. Call 508/653-3009.

1, 8, 15, 22
Principles of Plant Ecology, lecture series. Frances Clark, botanist. 7-9pm. NEWFS

7
Soil: The Secret to Successful Gardens, talk. Paul E. Rogers, horticultural advisor. 10am-3pm. THBG

8
Networking Meeting. 9-10:30am. Cronkhite Graduate Center, Map Room. Topic: Estimating the installation of a design (re-scheduled from January). Open to BSLA Radcliffe members. RC

Rem Koolhaas in conversation with George Baird, to mark the occasion of the publication of S, M, L, XL. 6pm. GSD

8, 15, 22
Building the Design: How to Solve Problems in Landscape Construction, slide lecture. Bob Hanss, landscape architect and design/build professional. 6:30-8:30pm. AA

13
Library Orientation and Tour. Walter T. Punch, MHS Head Librarian. 2:30-3:30pm. MHS

Lecture by Philippe Robert, architect, Paris. 6pm. GSD

14 WED
American Cottage Gardening, slide lecture. Isabel Wheat, landscape designer and horticulturist. 7-8:30pm. MHS

Perennials for Continuing Beauty, slide lecture. Mary Ann McGourty, nursery owner and garden writer. 10am-noon. THBG

The Fragrant Garden, slide lecture. Mary Ann McGourty, nursery owner. 1-3pm. THBG

21
Board Meeting. 9am. All are welcome. Cronkhite Graduate Center, Room D. RC

Lecture by Andrea Zittel, artist, New York. 6:30pm. GSD

24
Victorian Cast Iron, slide lecture. Barbara Rotundo, historian and cemetery expert. 2-3:30pm. MAC

Walking Through Winter, walk led by Arnold Arboretum staff person. 10:30am-12:30pm. AA

27
Comparing the Viburnums in Form, Fruit, and Flower, slide lecture. Tom Ward, greenhouse manager and viburnum admirer. 6:30-8:30pm. AA

28

The Inward Garden, slide lecture. Julie Messervy, landscape designer and author. 7-8:30pm. MHS

Trees and Shrubs for the Naturalistic Garden, slide lecture. Sally Taylor, education coordinator for the Connecticut College Arboretum. 10am-noon. THBG

Perennials for the Shade, slide lecture. Leo Blanchette, nursery owner and garden writer. 1-3pm. THBG

Lecture by Toyo Ito, architect, Tokyo. 6pm. GSD

28, Mar. 6, 13, 20
Conservation Biology, lecture series. Frances Clark, botanist. 7-9pm. NEWFS
February 29
Baroque Rome and Land Ownership, slide lecture. Miroslava Benes, Associate Professor of the History of Landscape Architecture, Harvard University. Her forthcoming book is on villa gardens and land ownership. 12:30-1:30pm. RC

The Evolution and Medicinal Potential of the Ginkgo Tree, slide lecture. Peter Del Tredici, Assistant Director for Living Collections, Arnold Arboretum. 7-8:30pm. AA

February 29, Mar. 10, 21, Apr. 2
Environmental Gems in Your Own Backyard, collaborative lecture series with four local environmental organizations. THBG

Exhibitions

through February 16
Samuel Parson Jr.: The Art of Landscape Architecture. AA

through February 25
The Paintings of Sylvia Plimack Mangold. MFA

January 29 through February 27
Urban design guidelines for Dewey Square by Machado and Silvetti Associates. BSA

end of January through February
Work of Virginia Purviance, 1993 Radcliffe Seminars graduate. No Exit Gallery. RC

February 12 through March 7
Work of Rafael Viñoly. GSD

Upcoming

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February 12 through March 7
Work of Rafael Viñoly. GSD

Upcoming

March 1, 8, 15, 22, 10am-noon. Watershed Policy for Natural & Cultural Landscapes, landscape design forum. David Miller, landscape architect. Radcliffe Seminars, 617/495-8600.


March 16, 9am-4pm. Color Workshop with Wendy Pomeroy, basic tools for color and drawing techniques. Limit of 15. Cronkhite Graduate Center. For information call Wendy Pomeroy: 617/876-7441. RC

Sponsoring Organizations

AA Arnold Arboretum
The Arborway
Jamaica Plain
524-1718

BGA Boston GreenSpace Alliance
44 Bromfield St., Boston
426-6597

BNAF Boston Natural Areas Fund
25 West Street, Boston
542-7696

BSA Boston Society of Architects
52 Broad Street, Boston
951-1433

BSLA Boston Society of Landscape Architects
320 Newbury Street
Boston
247-1613

GSD Harvard Graduate School of Design, Gund Hall
48 Quincy St., Cambridge
495-4784

(For current news see “GSD This Week,” available at the front desk in Gund Hall.)

HM Historic Massachusetts Old City Hall
45 School Street, Boston
723-3383

MAC Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery,
580 Mt. Auburn Street
Cambridge
547-7105

MHS Massachusetts Horticultural Society
300 Massachusetts Ave.
Boston
536-9280

NEGHS New England Garden History Society at MHS
300 Mass. Ave., Boston
536-9280

NEHRN New England Horticultural Resources Network
Moss Hill Farm
P.O. Box 1097, Sherborn
508/653-3098

NEWFS New England Wildflower Society
Hemenway Rd.
Framingham
508/877-6574

RC Radcliffe Chapter, BSLA
Cronkhite Graduate Center
6 Ash Street, Cambridge
495-8600

THBG Tower Hill Botanic Garden
11 French Drive
P.O. Box 598, Boylston
508/869-6111.
A Secret Garden

Unless you have been a patient, visitor or staff member at the New England Baptist Hospital, you are probably unaware of the two serene courtyards within the hospital. They are two distinct spaces divided by the Edgar O. Silver Bridge which connects two of the Hospital's buildings.

Designed by Susan Childs, whose grandfather, Edgar O. Silver, was a founding member of the Hospital Board, and made possible by significant contributions from her parents, Harris J. and Geraldine S. Nelson, the courtyards embody three generations of a family's commitment to New England Baptist Hospital. The Nelson Courtyards won a Merit Award from the Boston Society of Landscape Architects in 1990.

The East Courtyard is surrounded by buildings on all four sides. One enters from a colonnaded bluestone terrace off the lobby or from the Silver Bridge where one passes through a row of four Gingko biloba. Five specimen American holly (Ilex opaca) form the north wall of this courtyard. Planted among them are mixed Japanese holly (Ilex crenata 'Convexa'), longstalk holly (Ilex pedunculosa), mountain laurel (Kalmia latifolia), and cherry laurel (Prunus laurocerasus 'Schipkaensis'). The entire grouping is underplanted with Baltic ivy (Hedera helix 'Baltica'). The central planting area is highlighted by a single Japanese snow-bell (Styrax japonica) and a cluster of sweet azalea (Rhododendron arborescens) in a bed of Vinca minor with spring-blooming wood anemone (Anemone nemorosa) and snowdrops (Galanthus nivalis). Summer interest is provided by blue lacecap hydrangea (Hydrangea macrophylla) and Betty Prior roses (Rosa floribunda 'Betty Prior') in containers at the corners of the paving.

The West Courtyard is surrounded by buildings on three sides only. The north-facing fourth side opens to a lawn framed by six columnar English oaks (Quercus robur 'Fastigiata') set in raised brick planters. This courtyard can be reached from the Silver Bridge, where three Gingkos in a raised bed echo those of the East Courtyard. The central planting area repeats the rectangular bed of Vinca minor with a cluster of sweet azaleas and highbush blueberries (Vaccinium corymbosum). The west wall is framed by seven Zumi crabapples (Malus x zumi callocarpa) underplanted with Japanese holly, longstalk holly, mountain laurel, and cherry laurel. Three Amelanchier canadensis screen the view from the corridor and provide interest in spring and autumn. The blue lacecap hydrangea and the Betty Prior roses in containers are repeated.

The structural plantings of the courtyards are primarily evergreen, with seasonal variety provided by the deciduous species, containers, and "bulbs" planted in the groundcovers. The plantings are well chosen to maximize the limited amount of light in these courtyards.

—Deborah Rivers

The Nelson Courtyards at New England Baptist Hospital

Deborah Rivers
Green Tips

Take advantage of the services offered to members by the Radcliffe BSLA chapter:

Networking meetings. Meet your colleagues, gain valuable information about the practical side of design. First Thursday, 9:00am-10:30am, Cronkhite Graduate Center. Contact Natalie Delvaille (617) 944-0568 or Sally Muspratt (617) 327-2401.

Community Outreach Group. Gain valuable design and consulting experience while you help schools and community groups improve their physical environments. Projects await! For information, call Lucia Droby (617) 566-0018 or Rosalie Johnson (508) 369-7056.

Subscribe to Garden Clippings a horticultural newsletter published by UMASS Extension. send a check for $7.50 made out to University of Massachusetts to Garden Clippings French Hall, Box 32910, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003-2910.

Advance notice: September, 1996, Gardens of Ireland, a garden history tour conducted by Marie Stella Byrnes. For information, contact Ms. Byrnes at (413) 339-4278.

1995 BSLA Professional Awards

Plan, Winchester, MA, to Julie Khuen, Radcliffe Seminars Program in Landscape Design; Todd Richardson, Advisor; Trustees of the Winchester Public Library, Client.

The goal of this project was the reintegration of the public library and nearby Mill Pond into Winchester's civic center, drawing on the 1914 master plan and pond improvements by H. J. Kellaway of Olmsted Brothers, which centered on the reflective pond and a semicircular stepped dam. The plan proposes transformation of awkward or unusable spaces into accessible outdoor rooms.

—Karen Madsen

Perspectives in landscape design

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