



The Mid-South Hydrangea Society In Bloom!

Volume 1, Issue 4

October 2005

From the President:

It's been a long hot summer, and while this was a spectacular season for hydrangeas, the oppressive heat later this summer caused them to fade more quickly. As a result I'm not seeing the good fall color we usually have. But there's always next year and with the new reblooming varieties, I'm looking forward to better and better flower production. What else has happened since last we met in April?

A Memphis contingent of eight MSHS members attended the 2nd CANR Hydrangea Conference in Athens and Thomson, GA in May (see separate article.)

We held our first Hydrangea Garden Tour in June and a big thank you is owed to Anne Riordan, Walter Dunn, Linda Orton, and Diane Meucci and Wolfgang Marquardt for allowing us in their gardens for this very successful event. Our first tour was for society members and their guests and we had at least 60 in attendance. We hope in the future to open it to the public and include plant sales. And we want to see your garden too! Your garden, small or large, manicured or informal, would be a great addition to our June 2006 tour. Remember that "Fall is for Planting" so add some hydrangeas now so you'll have more for us to come see next summer! Anne Riordan was our tour chair and I believe she will serve in that capacity for another year. I'm sure she'll be seeking you out soon!

The Alabama Hydrangea Society had their first garden tour on June 18, and of course MSHS VP Linda Orton and I went. It was a delightful trip and included Aldridge Gardens, home of the beautiful *H. quercifolias* 'Snowflake' and 'Harmony', the lake-side home garden of Kay and Eddie Aldridge, and Wendy and Bew White, whose steep hillside garden was featured earlier this year in Southern Living magazine (May 2005 issue). Another of the gardens had 3 to 4 dozen 'Snowflake' hydrangeas that were 20 years old and provided an impressive framework to a large rural garden with an equally impressive restored log home. We met some new hydrangea enthusiasts and had a great time visiting these beautiful gardens. Birmingham is a nice weekend trip, and you might be well served to try and attend any future hydrangea tours there. I know I will.

We now have 117 members and climbing! Not bad for a fledgling society. Don't forget to renew your \$10 annual dues at or prior to the October 22 Fall Educational Event to continue receiving your newsletter and to attend that event at no additional cost. (A renewal form is included with this newsletter.)

We need you to donate some volunteer hours at the Memphis Botanic Garden to help offset our rent there. We receive \$20 credit for every 4 hours worked. We like to keep our dues low, and want to bring in good speakers and interesting plants-people for our events. (When you volunteer you can work anywhere in the garden and you must sign the Mid-South Hydrangea Society Volunteer Book at the MBG main receptionist desk.)

The board is discussing new officers for our Society for the upcoming year and we will vote at our February meeting. If you are interested in a position on the board or on a committee, please contact me. We only have a few meetings each year, so it isn't really a time-consuming responsibility. We just want to get together, have fun, and learn more about hydrangeas!

I'm looking forward to seeing you all (our out-of-town members also) at our Fall Educational event on Saturday, October 22 with Tara Dillard. I'm so glad she'll be presenting two talks for us, and we have a great morning planned. So be sure to get your membership renewed so you can get in free, and bring a friend!

Linda Lanier

hydrangea@midsouth.rr.com or 901-452-4667

Hydrangea Conference At CANR

(Center for Applied Nursery Research)



This was the second CANR Hydrangea Conference and the "Memphis Contingent" included the Mid-South Hydrangea Society Board (Linda Lanier, Linda Orton, Caroline Brown, Michelle Rogers, and Anne

Riordan.) Also attending were MSHS members Toot Fineburg-Buchner, and Molly and Kennon Hampton. These conferences may only be held every second or third year, so it was a treat to be able to attend.

The conference began with a tour of the University of Georgia's Horticulture Farm, Shade Garden and Greenhouses in and around Athens led by Dr. Michael Dirr where we saw a variety of macrophylla, paniculata, serrata, arborescens and other hydrangeas under cultivation. Most of the horticulture program efforts this year are focused on controlled breeding of macrophylla hydrangeas. The enthusiastic work of Dr. Dirr and his crew is nothing short of revolutionary. We had a tour and reception at UGA Coach Vince Dooley's home in Athens where we saw the original Dooley hydrangea.

Coach Dooley was out of town, but Dr. Dirr led a tour of the property that revealed Coach Dooley's obsession for plants. Coach Dooley actually took classes from Dr. Dirr to increase his knowledge and his large garden was full of unusual evergreens, shrubs, and beautiful container plants.



Dr. Dirr in front of the original 'Dooley'

We heard hydrangea experts and respected horticulturists discuss hydrangeas, history, companion plants, and the future of hydrangeas. Here's a list of the speakers:

Eddie Aldridge of Aldridge Gardens in Hoover, AL spoke about the new Botanic Garden his family foundation began. The Aldridge family is famous for their Oakleaf hydrangeas and discovered the 'Snowflake' and 'Harmony' quercifolia hydrangeas.

Mal Condon of the Hydrangea Farm Nursery in Nantucket, MA spoke about *Paniculatas*, which are so spectacular in northern areas. So much attention goes to mopheads and lacecaps that we often overlook the beauty and reliability of *Paniculata* hydrangeas.

Elizabeth Dean of the Wilkerson Mill Gardens in Palmetto, GA (www.hydrangea.com) talked about selling hydrangeas to the public and how you never know what will be the favorite. Elizabeth and her husband Gene Griffith operate a wonderful nursery and display garden just outside of Atlanta that is definitely worth a visit if you're in the Atlanta area.

Dan Hinkley of Heronswood Nursery in Kingston, WA, spoke about the combinations of other plants, flowers and leaves that compliment hydrangeas and the many under-utilized cousins of hydrangeas. His nursery has a vast collection of rare and unusual plants, and he's been known to climb mountains to locate interesting and rare cultivars.

Hayes Jackson, plantsman and Alabama extension agent, showed pictures from his garden and illustrated the variety of plants that compliment hydrangeas in a woodland garden. Hayes is most known to us for his namesake seedling of *Arborescens* called 'Hayes' Starburst'. (Hayes is the featured speaker at the American Hydrangea Society meeting in Atlanta on October 17.)



Judith King (www.hydrangeashydrangeas.com) shared methods of drying, coloring and decorating with hydrangeas. Judith has a wonderful informational website where she shares pictures, tips, and shopping links.

Penny McHenry, the founder of the American Hydrangea Society, namesake of the "Pennymac", and matriarch of the hydrangea craze, spoke about her hydrangea garden.

Tara Dillard, current president of the American Hydrangea Society (and our October 22 featured speaker) showed us slides from her garden haven and emphasized you can never have too many hydrangeas.

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Ted Stephens of the Nurseries Caroliniana from North Augusta, South Carolina spoke of his trip to Japan and the wonderful exotic plants that he found along the way.

Other speakers were **Jonathan Pedersen** of Bailey Nurseries talking about the marketing blitz for the Endless Summer hydrangea and **Sandra Reed** of the US National Arboretum in McMinville, TN, who spoke of the breeding process for hydrangeas and keeping track of all the crosses and generations.

Of course we toured some unique nurseries and came home packed to the gills. We also had a tour of the CANR facility with a thrilling plant sale of seedlings and

full sized plants. Our only regret was Dr. Dirr's collection of 100 plants offered at auction that went for only a few hundred dollars. If we had known, we would have saved room or been prepared to get those wonderful specimens home and donate them to the Memphis Botanic Garden. Next time we'll be ready! We met people from around the country and Europe – many in the business, and many enthusiasts (fanatics?) just like we are. I promise you won't regret it if you plan to attend the next conference. We hope to show you some photos



Mid-South Hydrangea Society Hosts 1st Annual Garden Tour

Approximately sixty members and guests gathered at the garden of Anne and Jerry Riordan at 9 AM, Saturday, June 4, 2005, to kick off our first annual garden tour. With the goal of educating gardeners on the use of hydrangeas in the landscape, this garden chose to intergrate the genus into its mixed borders. Divided into rooms in the English style, guests wandered from one area to the next discovering the 18 varieties of hydrangeas along side their companion plants. After a couple of plant give-aways, we were off to our next garden.

Set among towering soft and hardwood trees, Walter and Nita Dunn's garden boast huge specimens of established hydrangeas. Large groupings of mopheads and paniculatas (promising future blooms) greeted visitors on approach to the house. The large naturalistic water feature was of great interest along with the home's attached greenhouse. The tour inspired Walter to create a new hydrangea walk through the woodland to the swimming pool. Unusual varieties (through mail order) challenged photographers and awed guests. Special thanks to Nita for refreshments and hospitality.

The sun was getting high and warm on our third stop at Linda Orton's garden. A new stone walkway led us through an astounding collection of mophead and lacecap hydrangea. In the rear garden, guests made themselves at home by filling benches and swings, partaking of lemonade and cookies, and delighting in her other collections of clematis, hosta, and perennials. Linda took questions until we took flight to our final garden.

Our last tour concluded at Gardens Oy Vey, the home, garden and nursery of Diane Meucci and Wolfgang Marquadt. Located in Arlington, the property boasts mossy woodland paths and a pond surrounded by native plant material and eclectic garden art. The home sits on the edge of a charming dell that the couple has filled with wonderful specimen plants, native oakleaf hydrangeas and their beloved serrata hydrangeas (which are native to the mountains of Japan and well suited to the mid-south). After a tour of the property, we happily concluded the day by purchasing plants for our own gardens.

Special thanks to our hosts. Gardens always look their best when filled with enthusiastic gardeners. It was a fun and inspiring day.

Please join us next year or better yet consider opening your garden next year for the 2nd Annual Hydrangea Garden Tour!

The MidSouth Hydrangea Society's Fall Educational Program



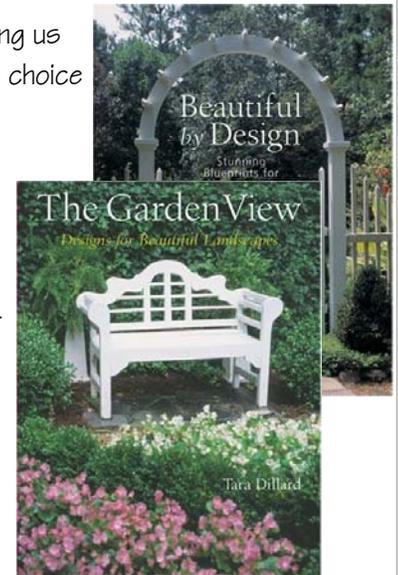
Tara Dillard will be The MidSouth Hydrangea Society's featured speaker and guest at their first fall educational event. The event date is Saturday, October 22nd, 2005. The location is the Memphis Botanic Gardens from 8:30 to 12:30. Tara will speak first on "Hydrangeas: In the Garden, Pruning, Drying" and her second presentation will be "The Garden Axis: From Every Direction Beautiful."

Non-members may attend for a \$10.00 fee and renewing members will be admitted free of charge. Those who join the Mid-South Hydrangea Society the day of the event may attend for a \$5.00 fee in addition to the \$10.00 membership fee.

Cricket Hill Farms in Conway, Arkansas, and our local Gardens Oy Vey will be providing us with a selection of dwarf conifers and hydrangeas for sale on site along with some choice hydrangea books. Refreshments and light snacks will be provided.

Tara Dillard will be available to autograph her books The Garden View: Designs for Beautiful Landscapes and Beautiful by Design: Stunning Blueprints for Harmonious Gardens which be for sale during the event.

Tara Dillard is a horticulturist and garden designer with a mission of creating beautiful gardens, promoting the right plant for the right spot, and educating people about plants, maintenance and design. She makes her home in Stone Mountain, Georgia and has degrees in industrial engineering and horticulture. Tara Dillard is a national award winning author, speaker, designer and current president of The American Hydrangea Society located in Atlanta, Ga. Credits include host of CBS TV Better Gardening Show, garden expert for NBC TV "Landscape Solutions", "Our Place", and WSB AM750 radio The Walter Reeves Show. Tara also teaches horticulture at the Atlanta Botanic Garden and Gwinnett College and travels throughout the southeast lecturing.



Call for Volunteers

Food Needed for our Tara Dillard Speaker Event

The event we have been talking about for almost a year is practically here! We currently have less than 2 weeks to finalize our efforts for our Tara Dillard event on 10/22. I am happy to report we have received a nice compliment of volunteers to handle the activities portion. However, we need some good cooks and/or generous souls to bring food. The society will provide drinks. Remember this is an early morning/half-day event. Consequently, we are looking for contributions of some simple to handle finger food. Please contact me if you plan on bringing something. Linda Orton 383-4433 home 356-0830 cell or ks_meadowlark@yahoo.com

Thank you for volunteering.

Everyone Wants to Know More About HYDRANGEAS!

Thanks to the Delta Home and Garden Club (Cleveland, MS) for their \$50 donation to our society. Linda Lanier spoke to that group in September, and also to the Covington (TN) Garden Club.

Linda Lanier, Linda Orton, Anne Riordan, and Caroline Brown gave a Hydrangea presentation at the Dixie Regional Hosta Conference on October 1, and Linda Lanier will speak on Hydrangeas at the Germantown Library Southern Flower Series on October 6 and the Evergreen Garden Club on October 14.

Linda Lanier talked about Hydrangeas on Channel 3's "Live at Nine" in July and Anne Riordan and Linda Orton spoke to the Cordova Garden Club in August.



Grayswood—Memphis Botanic Garden Summer 2005

2005 Hydrangea Garden Tour Pictures

If you attended our June 2005 hydrangea garden tour and took a picture (or pictures) that you believe is especially interesting or good, please contact Caroline Brown ckbrown@fedex.com or Linda Lanier llanier1@midsouth.rr.com. We are preparing a year in review program and would like to see the garden tour through your pictures.

Sunny Creek Nursery Upcoming Sales/Specials and Open Houses

You may or may not be aware that we have a wonderful local nursery which is owned and operated by Leigh Ballard — Sunny Creek Nursery in La Grange, TN which is about a one hour drive east of Memphis. Leigh has brought her unique selection of perennials and shrubs to several Master Gardener events and has been a highlighted companion vendor at a past Mid-South Hosta Society Hosta sale. Leigh has occasional sales and special events during the year. If you are interested in receiving her e-mail and postal notices about these, a sign up sheet will be offered at our October 22 event. If you can not attend but want to be added to her list please contact me, Linda Orton at 383-4433 or ks_meadowlark@yahoo.com.

Membership Update:

Welcome to our new Mid-South Hydrangea Society members. We look forward to seeing you October 22!

Arensberg, Marilyn

Edwards, Laura

Paige, Elizabeth

Watson, Debbie

Armour, Margie

Horton, Selby

Pian, Bernadette Kearney Wynns, Carolyn

Austin, Julie

McAdams, Kay

Pian, Denise

Burke, Lila Beth

Morgan, Berta

Sams, David

Dunkin, Cynthia

O'Neill, Jean

Taylor, Linda

Companion Plants for Hydrangea

At the Dixie Hosta Society meeting, Chris Spindel from the Memphis Fern Society was asked about the best evergreen ferns for the South, to use with hostas (and other large-leaved plants like hydrangeas.) Evergreen ferns would especially provide some winter interest when the hydrangeas and hostas are resting for the winter and like moist, humus rich soil with good drainage, just like hydrangeas, Chris suggested the following:

'Evergreen Christmas Fern' (Polystichum



acrostichoides) Chris says this fern does tend to 'lie down' in winter, but pops back up in Spring. It is similar to a Boston fern and is used widely in Christmas decorations.

'Autumn Fern' (Dryopteris erythrosora). This fern is so named because of the new fronds that emerge with a bronze/reddish color. They hold this color until they mature, when they change to a deep, glossy green in early summer. This hardy, evergreen, native fern with upright shape and medium growth rate is very popular and easy to grow. 1-2 feet tall or taller, Zones 5-8. Also known as 'Shaggy Shield fern'.



'Southern Wood Fern' (Dryopteris normalis). This fern tolerates more sun and may be only partially evergreen. It grows 24-40 inches tall.

'Louisiana Wood Fern'

(Dryopteris ludoviciana). This semi-evergreen fern grows up to 4 feet tall with shiny, leathery fronds. Also known as 'Southern Shield fern'.

'New York Fern' (Thelypteris noveboracensis). This slender shield fern grows to 1-2 feet tall and is semi-evergreen. Also known as 'Tapering fern'.

'Holly Fern' (Cyrtomium falcatum). Evergreen in mild winters with stiff, erect, dark green fronds of holly-like shiny leaflets having coarsely fringed margins. Grows 2-3 feet high. Also called 'Japanese Holly fern'.



'Fortune's Cold Hardy Holly Fern' (Cyrtomium fortunei). Paler and with less shiny fronds than the Holly Fern, this is an excellent hardy fern that will tolerate colder weather than the Japanese Holly Fern. The dull gray-green color will add a soft look to the shade garden. It is an easy and fast grower with a tall, erect habit. Evergreen to semi-evergreen. Zones 5-10, height 18-30 inches.

Try
www.ferns.com
for more about
ferns!



The Mid-South Hydrangea Society

Membership Form

Memphis, Tennessee
Founded October 2004
hydrangea@midsouth.rr.com

Annual Membership Fee: \$10

New Member _____ Renewal _____ (please check one)

Make checks payable to **The Mid-South Hydrangea Society**
Mail your form and dues to:

**Linda Lanier
Mid-South Hydrangea Society
635 West Drive
Memphis, TN 38112-1728**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Birthdate (Month and Day only) _____

Telephone: _____ Home

_____ Work

_____ Cell

Email: _____

Other Garden Clubs you are a member of: _____

- Membership includes four newsletters per year
- Quarterly meetings are normally held the second Monday in February, April, June (annual tour), and October

We look forward to having you join us!

**THE MID-SOUTH HYDRANGEA
SOCIETY**

635 West Dr.
Memphis, TN 38112
E-Mail: hydrangea@midsouth.rr.com

2005 Officers:

President	Linda Lanier llanier1@midsouth.rr.com 452-4667
Vice-President/ Program Chair	Linda Orton ortonlm@bellsouth.net 383-4433
Treasurer	Michelle Rogers merogers@fedex.com 324-1083
Membership	Caroline Brown ckbrown@fedex.com 683-9766
Annual Tour Chair	Anne Riordan mailmanann@bellsouth.net 683-7458



The MidSouth Hydrangea Society's Fall Educational Program

Schedule for Saturday, October 22, 2005 Tara Dillard Event

8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	Socializing, refreshments, shopping, book signing
9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Presentation – “Hydrangeas: In the Garden, Pruning, Drying”
10:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Break with book signing, shopping, refreshments
10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	Presentation – “Garden Axis: From Every Direction Beautiful”
11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Drawings, acknowledgements
12 noon – 12:30 p.m.	Event ends. We thank you for attending. See you next year!

Questions? Contact Linda Orton at 901-383-4433