



News from Stonecrop Gardens

Fall 2009

“To plant and maintain a flower border, with a good scheme for colour, is by no means the easy thing that is commonly supposed.”
—Gertrude Jekyll

History of the Flower Garden Part 2, Final segment

In our last issue we looked at the *raison d'être* of the Flower Garden, including the vision and the early construction. In this final segment we address the nitty-gritty: the nuts and bolts of the plantings, the colour schemes, the maintenance regimen, and what makes the Flower Garden the most distinctively dynamic feature of Stonecrop.

Planting Begins

Having established a formal framework, it was time to plant. The design intent was to have informal plantings within a formal framework, creating an interesting and exuberant “mixed border.”

The Flower Garden proper consists of approximately 25 beds of varying shapes and sizes. Some beds, located against a fence, are only viewed from one side. Others are freestanding, viewed from all sides. Some beds are in total shade, some are in total sun, and some have partial sun/shade depending upon the time of day.

In the Inner Sanctum, which is a large flat area, the intent was to use all the colours of the rainbow including such “difficult” colours as magenta and orange and to show how they can be used in an attractive and pleasing way. To avoid a “fruit salad” effect, each bed was given a colour theme which would compliment the surrounding beds, thus unifying the overall Inner Sanctum.



A May moment in the Flower Garden, broad beans edged with lettuce in the Vegetable Garden

Permanent plantings—a certain tree, a shrub, a rose, vines, and a variety of perennials and grasses—give each bed individual structure. Bulbs are an integral part of each bed, from the early spring bulbs to the brightly coloured tulips and alliums. Spaces between the permanent plantings are filled with annuals, vines, tropicals, sub-tropicals and summer tubers such as dahlias. Many of these “fillers” not only help to extend the season but also add exuberantly hot and bold colour. Let’s not forget the very faithful self-sowers that we so rely on year after year. Some are welcome for their foliage effect such as *Perilla frutescens* (Shiso) with its luminous maroon leaves that add bold blocks of colour, giving rhythm and unity to the beds. Others are welcome for their flowering display such as *Nigella* (Love-in-a-Mist) and *Papaver somniferum* (Opium Poppy) delighting all with their array of colours. However, our Himalayan impatiens take Best in Show in the “filler” category; they are a big presence, so floriferous, reaching over eight feet in every season and thriving on and on well into the fall.

Repetition of specific plants throughout the Outer and Inner Sanctum, whether they are permanent plants or “fillers,” further helps to unify the Flower Garden proper by creating “moments of bloom.” These “moments” include early spring bulbs, iris, roses, lilies, daylilies, salvias, dahlias, chrysanthemums, grasses, and autumn colour.

In the last couple of years, several beds have been removed in order to open up the area for better viewing and traffic flow. We removed two pastel triangles, a grey square in the centre, and a purple/orange square bed.

At the south end of the Inner Sanctum was a cruciform layout of *Tilia cordata* (Littleleaf Linden) pruned in a “Cat’s Cradle” fashion. These lindens were grown from seed by Frank Cabot and gave welcome shade and interest. However, as they declined and required extra maintenance, we removed them in stages. This was a tough decision, but on the plus side the Rainbow opened up dramatically and along with the lawn has flourished in the welcome sun.

Colour Themes

The Flower Garden is divided into two major sections, the Outer Sanctum (the area closest to the house), and the Inner Sanctum (the centre area enclosed by the cedar fence).

In the Outer Sanctum

- Beds 1, 2, 3, Birch Bed and Cornus Bed—the colours are softer, consisting mostly of pinks, purples, blues and greys.
- Skinny Vista—blue and yellow
- Stable Close/Black Garden—deepest, darkest maroons (faux black)

Within the Inner Sanctum all the beds are colour-coded.

- White Garden
- Old Rose Garden (pastel shades)
- Red Bed
- ROY (red, orange, yellow)
- Peach Square
- Yellow Square (with tripod)
- Pink/Chartreuse Square (with tripod)
- Purple/Magenta Square (with tripod)
- Blue/Lavender/Grey Bed
- Herb Garden (culinary and medicinal)
- Vegetable Garden with Miss Jekyll (ornamental as well as productive)
- Rainbow (Richard Of York Gained Battle In Vain —ROYGBIV):

Red Rainbow ranges from darkest maroons to scarlet.

Pink Pie is the adjacent pie-shaped bed that has a range of paler hues of the Red Rainbow.

Yellow Rainbow ranges from orange through pale yellow, to green.

Yellow Pie has a paler range of orange through green.

Blue Rainbow ranges from blue through indigo to violet.

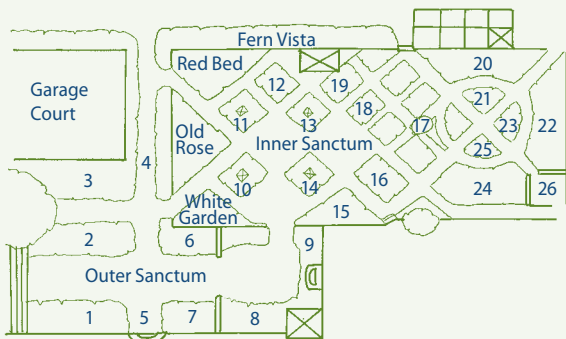
Blue Pie has softer hues of the colours of the Blue Rainbow.

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The Flower Garden

Outer Sanctum	Inner Sanctum	
1 Bed 1	9 Fountain	18 Vegetable Garden
2 Bed 2	10 Pink/Chartreuse	19 Fruit Garden
3 Bed 3	11 Peach Bed	20 Red Rainbow
4 Skinny Vista	12 Red/Orange/Yellow (ROY)	21 Pink Pie
5 Villandry Seat	13 Yellow Square	22 Yellow Rainbow
6 Cornus Bed	14 Purple/Magenta	23 Yellow Pie
7 Birch Bed	15 Blue/Lavender/Grey	24 Blue Rainbow
8 Stable Close/Black Garden	16 Herb Garden	25 Blue Pie
	17 Miss Gertrude Jekyll	26 Outdoor Garden Room

ILLUSTRATION BY CAROLINE BURGESS



Director's Notes

Dear Members and Friends,

As I write, the snow is falling and the temperatures are in the low 30s consistent with the anomalous weather we have experienced this season. We have seen record rainfall during a very short, cool summer, followed by an early fall and winter seemingly close at its heels. However, despite the crazy season, we have had a record number of visitors to the garden for which we are most grateful. Our members and visitors bring a wonderful energy to the garden and inspiration to the gardeners.

This season we presented some new programs at Stonecrop, starting with Yoga in the Garden. Classes were held twice a week, outdoors or in our Library during inclement weather. The garden provided such a serene setting and drew quite a few regulars to the classes, as well as drop-ins. Yoga in the Garden was great success in its debut season and we hope to continue it in 2010.

Following the English tradition, we introduced Tea in the Garden this fall. On the deck overlooking the glorious Hudson Highlands, visitors were offered the chance to purchase a rejuvenating cup of tea and a variety of cakes. Tea in the Garden will continue for our six Garden Conservancy Open Days next year.

To finish the season, our inaugural Terrarium Workshop allowed participants the opportunity to create their own "gardens under glass." We anticipate this fun and informative class will become a regular in Stonecrop's Workshop Series.

I thank you for your continued support during 2009. Please look forward with us to an exciting season of gardening in the upcoming year. We hope to see you at Spring Open House to be held on March 27, 2010.

With all best wishes,
Caroline Burgess, *Director*



Yoga in the garden



Amy Pelletier-Clark displays a newly planted terrarium



Gabrielle Homola

Summer Internship

Gabrielle Homola was our summer intern, continuing Stonecrop's partnership with the Philipstown Garden Club. A junior at Our Lady of Lourdes High School in Poughkeepsie, Gabrielle's academic interests are English and Global Studies. She also enjoys soccer and has been dancing with the Kelly-Oster School of Irish Dance for 11 years. She has competed not only locally but also in California, Canada, and England.

At the completion of her summer term, Gabrielle recognized the confidence she had gained in the garden and her sense of belonging to the Stonecrop family. "Working at Stonecrop was hard but it paid off. [It was] an amazing learning experience."



Left, Caroline Burgess and Michael Hagen proud of their giant parsnip



Below, Joanne Murphy potting plants for sale

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Stonecrop's mission is to uphold and demonstrate the highest standards of horticultural practice and to promote the use of such standards among amateur and professional gardeners through aesthetic displays and educational programs.

Hello, Dahlia!

Well Hello, Dahlia!

You're looking swell, Dahlia,

We can tell, Dahlia,

You're still growin', you're still flowerin'

You're still goin' strong.

Want to Make a Statement in Your Garden... Grow Delightful, Dazzling Dahlias

- Dahlias add exuberance and pizzazz to the garden
- Incredible variety of colour, shapes and sizes
- Lavish display that continues until frost
- Long-lasting supply of cut flowers
- Lush presence... so evocative of the tropics
- Easy to grow, can treat as an annual or perennial
- Big bang for the buck... \$\$\$\$

Since its introduction into Europe over 200 years ago, the dahlia has always been a stalwart of the cottage garden, bedding display and showbench. Today, the dahlia's brilliantly flamboyant charms are more widely appreciated than ever, with gardeners incorporating them into a wide range of planting schemes from borders to containers.

The choice of form and colour available to the dahlia enthusiast is almost endless, and every year more names are added to the over 20,000 varieties.

There are passionate devotees of the dahlia and numerous organizations throughout the world with the main goal of advancing their growing and promoting their breeding and competitive exhibition. The American Dahlia Society (ADS) was formed in 1915 and has over 70 affiliated societies in the US and Canada. There are sister organizations in Great Britain, New Zealand and Australia as well as several other European and Asian countries.

Dahlia Culture

Planting

When we receive our dahlia tubers in spring they are bare root, each one with a name stamped on the tuber. We then pot them up and encourage them into growth, planting them out after the last frost, usually the end of May.

When planting, ensure your flowerbed is moist and your plants are watered well; never put a dry plant into dry soil. Make a hole slightly larger than the root ball. We generally plant at soil level or a little deeper, in which case the lower pair of leaves is removed, and the next pair of leaves is set at soil level. After planting, water well.

Seasonal Care

Once the young plants have become established, they make rapid growth, and it is important that the new growth is securely tied. A common method of supporting the growing dahlia is to insert four canes evenly spaced around the plant and then tie twine around the canes at intervals.

It is important to keep the plants weed free. Further weeding can be eliminated by applying mulch to the soil. Before applying the mulch, it is important that the soil is

Dahlia Forms

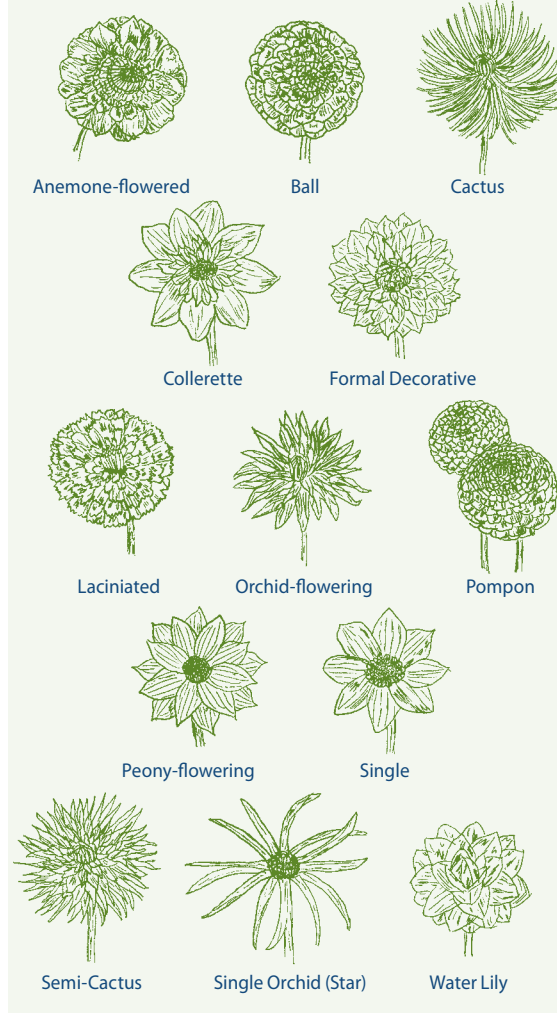


ILLUSTRATION BY CAROLINE BURNESS

The ADS categorizes dahlias into various groups based on Size, Form, and Colour.

Size

- AA **Giant** over 10" in diameter
- A **Large** over 8 to 10" in diameter
- B **Medium** over 6 to 8" in diameter
- BB **Small** over 4 to 6" in diameter
- M **Miniature** up to 4" in diameter
- BA **Ball** over 3½" in diameter
- MB **Miniature Ball** over 2 to 3½" in diameter
- P **Pompon** up to 2" in diameter
- MS **Mignon Single** up to 2" in diameter

Form

- AN Anemone-flowered
- BA Ball
- C Straight Cactus
- CO Collerette
- FD Formal Decorative
- IC Incurved Cactus
- ID Informal Decorative
- LC Lacinated
- MB Miniature Ball
- MS Mignon Single
- N Novelty
- NO Novelty Open Center
- NX Novelty Double Center
- O Orchid-flowering
- P Pompon
- PE Peony-flowering
- S Single
- SC Semi-Cactus
- ST Stellar
- WL Water Lily

Colour

- BI Bicolour—blooms with two distinctly clear and sharply separated colours
- BR Bronze
- DB Dark Blend
- DP Dark Pink
- DR Dark Red
- FL Flame Blend
- LB Light Blend—a blending of the lighter tints and tones of pink, yellow, lavender, and other pastels
- OR Orange
- PK Pink
- PR Purple
- R Red
- V Variegated—where two or more colours appear on the face of the bloom either in dots, splashes, or stripes on narrow lines
- W White
- Y Yellow

wet, and if no rain is expected, the soil should be given a good watering. No fertilizer should be necessary through the flowering season. The main requirement of dahlias is an adequate water supply. During hot sunny periods, dahlias will transpire through their leaves enormous quantities of water. Unless this can be replaced rapidly from underground water, the leaves will flag and the plant will wilt.

During early summer, the plants will make considerable growth, and this can attract infestations of aphids. A big danger is the spread of viruses brought in by aphids; thus, it is important to stay vigilant and take appropriate action.

Flowering

Dahlias typically begin to flower from June onwards. At this stage, the main **growing point** can be pinched out ("stopping") in order to encourage the growth of side shoots. "Stopping" the plant can be done in mid June if an early display is sought, but for a spread of flowering, stopping can be continued over a matter of weeks.

If a dahlia plant is left to its own devices, each flowering stem will terminate in a flowering bud, with generally two smaller buds alongside it. The two side buds, or wing buds should be pinched out as soon as is practical. This will encourage the terminal bud to grow larger and

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Miss Jekyll watches over the Vegetable Garden

History of the Flower Garden, Part 2

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Flower Garden Tool Shed



Corner seat in the Fruit Garden



Plant Choices

It was a real surprise to find out how hot the summers can be in the Northeast compared to England. However, I was able to capitalize on the summer heat and grow unusual annuals, half-hardy perennials, and tropicals with relative ease. These plants struggle with the cold and damp English climate. For instance, grasses often do not flower or set seed, and *Clematis terniflora* (Sweet Autumn Clematis) never flowers; the season is not warm enough.

Varying and experimenting with the “fillers” year after year continues to be fun. However, the permanent plantings and colour themes have remained the same. Before any plant is selected for the Flower Garden, it is carefully scrutinized to make sure it is an appropriate choice. Much of the following is taken into consideration:

- Overall shape of the plant or silhouette: Is it a mound? Is it vase-shaped? How tall and wide does it grow?
- Shape of the inflorescence: Is it a spike? Does it have a raceme or a panicle? Does it flower once or is it continuous?
- Individual flower shape, size, and texture: Is it a daisy? Is it an umbel? Is it pea-shaped? Do the flowers hang? Do the flowers “bowl you over” or do you have to look closely to see them?
- Flower colour and texture: Is it blending or contrasting? The flower colour of *Salvia involucrata* and *Dahlia* ‘Rebecca Lynn’ are exactly the same, but the flower shape differs strikingly. This is an example of blending. You can either contrast with the same overall flower colour but different shape, or you can contrast with the same flower shape but different colour and size.
- Leaf shape, size, colour, texture: bold foliage next to fine, grey foliage blended with purple foliage, glaucous combined with coarse foliage.

Consider the above guidelines a thought process, but don’t be too rigid. Trust me, you can take all this into consideration and drive yourself wild, but Mother Nature and serendipity can make combinations that you have never thought of, so experiment to your heart’s content.

In a nutshell, the Flower Garden is special because of the broad variety of plantings, the lively splashes of colour and the exuberance of our staff, all of which help to make it the eighth wonder of the modern world.

Labelling

It is problematic to label a garden which is all about aesthetics. The garden would be a sea of labels on long stakes, and since much of the garden is ever changing, it would be an eyesore as well as a constant task as plants come and go. Therefore it is much to your advantage to attend our annual Members’ Garden Party where we label over 150 plants in the Flower Garden alone. The Flower Garden has also played a star role in our Friday Evening Garden Walks with the “show-stoppers” of the week being featured and labelled.

How does it all happen? (Many factors come into play.)

Good soil is essential. Twenty years ago all the beds were double-dug, incorporating horse manure. The soil is now mulched every two to three years with horse manure. This we consider a must to maintain good soil structure and fertility.

Annuals, both homegrown and self-sowers, are essential as “fillers.”

Tender perennials such as cuphea, fuchsia, and dahlia provide the most bloom. In the early days we rented a greenhouse in Cold Spring to build our tender collection. We first built two polytunnels to overwinter stock plants for propagation purposes, and the tender collection started to grow. We now have six polytunnels and overwinter large tender plants and their propagules. The tenders are tougher than we think. They seem to cope well with being planted in the spring, dug up in the fall and then overwintered in cool (48°F) polytunnels where they are in a semi-dormant state.

Perennials are the backbone of the garden. To control flowering time and reduce staking needs, many of our perennials are regularly cut back by a third to a half, several times during the season. This will often produce a second flush of blooms. Deadheading regularly is important for aesthetic reasons and to ensure a continuum of bloom, as well as to control excess seeding.

Maintenance of the Flower Garden during the growing season is quite challenging. Deadheading, staking, mulching, weeding, and manoeuvring amongst the mass plantings is an isometric workout akin to Tournament Twister! In a season, the changes in the Flower Garden are dramatic, from bare earth in March to a ten-foot jungle by July and back to bare earth in November when we cut the garden down prior to bulb planting and mulching.

The Flower Garden is irrigated once a week during the dry summer months using oscillating sprinklers on stands which are moved throughout the garden. No fertilizing or spraying is required, just strong healthy plants going into good soil.

Gardening on this large scale and with this degree of complexity does require time, plants, labour, and knowledge, and it can seem daunting. However, recreating a modest Stonecrop-style Flower Garden following the principles of the “mixed border” in a bed or two at home is very manageable. The results will be the envy of your neighbours and a marvel to your friends.

—Caroline Burgess, Director

Going Native with Michael

Part I: Easy-to-Grow Plants for the Sun

We all know natives are in vogue. The past decade has brought a surge of interest in wildflowers, native flora, and natural landscaping not seen since the eighteenth century. These plants were the up-and-coming stars of European gardens, with both botanists and nurserymen eagerly awaiting the arrival of the latest exotic specimens sent from the New World by intrepid collectors and explorers like John Ray and William Bartram. It is easy to get caught up in this tide of “nativism” and launch into turning your front lawn into a prairie or your backyard into a butterfly preserve, but alas, all too often that becomes a road paved with heartache, broken dreams and the pungent smell of Wormwood (*Artemisia vulgaris*), Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) and Asiatic Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculare*). Let us not despair of the native garden but be mindful that there is a fine line between wildflowers and weeds. However, the fact remains: native plants do sustain insect populations that cannot feed or survive on alien exotics, and in planting and encouraging native species we in turn help sustain valuable habitat for increasingly threatened wildlife of all kinds. A few small steps can go a long way and by the simple act of cultivating well-chosen native perennials, we do our part to restore some of the balance to otherwise threatened ecosystems.

The following native perennials for sun have been chosen on the basis of a few stringent criteria: does it perform well in the garden, is it easy to grow, and do the deer eat it? These are fairly common plants that you may have in your own garden and not know are natives. They are all superb in their own right and well worth a place in any well-designed flower bed.

Agastache scrophulariifolia (Purple Giant Hyssop) is the native hyssop of the Northeast. This plant is much less demanding in cultivation than its southern counterparts and their hybrids, now commonly sold as tender perennials or annual bedding plants. It is a beautiful, statuesque plant reaching 5 feet in height, with aromatic, coarsely toothed foliage. Terminal 6-inch spikes of small violet to rosy pink flowers have extended stamens that give the flower spike a fuzzy appearance. Blooms from July until September.

Amsonia tabernaemontana (Common Blue Star) is a lovely late spring bloomer to 5 feet in height. Pyramidal panicles of five-petaled flowers the colour of blue Forget-Me-Nots are delightful. Look for *A. tabernaemontana* var. *salicifolia* (Willow-Leaved Blue Star) for a finer, slender-leaved form. Either variety has the bonus of excellent golden yellow foliage in the fall.

Asclepias incarnata (Swamp Milkweed) is a very pretty plant with flat clusters of rich pink flowers from July through September. Thrives happily in average garden soil and reaches to 5 feet in our Flower Garden, but can get to 6 feet in a wetter position. Swamp Milkweed is a far less enthusiastic spreader than its pale pink flowered cousin, *Asclepias syriaca* (Common Milkweed). A must-have for attracting Monarch butterflies to your garden. Also quite striking is the creamy white flowered form, *A. incarnata* ‘Alba’.

Baptisia australis (False Indigo) easily forms a huge clump with a thick, woody rootstock. Be careful where you site it, as it is not an easy plant to move once mature and can often become too big (4½ feet) for the smaller garden. Nonetheless, this is a great foliage plant forming large clumps of glabrous foliage on stiff, upright stems. The blue, pea-like flowers bloom in loose racemes in midsummer. Big, black, rattling seedpods remain throughout the winter. Fortunately there are some smaller varieties available such as *B. australis* var. *minor* and *B. bracteata* var. *leucophaea*. There are also choice hybrids such as *B. ‘Carolina Moonlight’* with soft buttery yellow blooms and *B. ‘Purple Smoke’* with charcoal-green stems and dusky purple flowers.

Chasmanthium latifolium (Northern Sea Oats) is perhaps the loveliest of our native grasses, producing branching stems with flattened, green, drooping spikelets in summer. These turn a bronze colour in autumn, as do the tufted clumps of flat-leaved foliage. A nice mid-size grass approximately 3 feet in height that is very easy to use in the landscape.

Echinacea purpurea (Purple Coneflower) is another classic native much loved by gardeners which has not lost its appeal over the years and is now available in a host of hybrid colours and sizes (over 60 at last count in the current *Royal Horticultural Society Plant Finder*). For a more ethereal appearance look for the exquisite *E. pallida* (Pale Coneflower) which has thinner, more elongated and reflexed petals of softest pale pink.

Eupatorium purpureum (Joe-Pye Weed) needs no introduction and is often undervalued or overlooked as an ornamental. An outstand-

ing plant for the back of the border that easily reaches 8 feet or more in height. There are several tall species that are very similar and even some choice cultivars such as *E. maculatum* Atropurpureum Group ‘Gateway’ and the white-flowered *E. fistulosum* f. *albidum* ‘Bartered Bride’. There are also several other smaller Eupatorium species like *E. perfoliatum* (Boneset), *E. coelestinum* (Mist Flower), and *E. rugosum* (White Snakeroot) that are must-have plants for any serious wildflower garden.

Liatris spicata (Dense Blazing Star) is a striking native with tufts of grassy leaves from which arise leafy stems bearing stiff bottlebrush-like spikes of dense flowerheads reaching up to 4 feet in height. *Liatris* is one of the few genera whose flowers at the top of the spike open first. There are several compact cultivars such as ‘Kobold’ and ‘Floristan Weiss’, all of which make excellent summer-blooming garden plants for full sun.

Panicum virgatum (Switch Grass) is one of the major components of the great tallgrass prairies at 5 feet in height. This grass has been the subject of much nursery selection over the past two decades resulting in over 20 cultivars and is now perhaps one of the staple grasses for the smaller landscape. The erect, vase-shaped habit, grey-green foliage, and profuse, airy flower panicles in late summer recommend it as an accent plant, while its intense fall colours of red, orange, and golden yellow add broad, dramatic impact when planted in bold sweeps or allowed to naturalize. Cultivars such as ‘Blue Tower’, ‘Heavy Metal’, and ‘Shenandoah’ all offer beautiful blue-green foliage and varying shades of glorious fall colour, making them outstanding ornamental grasses.

Pycnanthemum muticum (Mountain Mint) and its relative *P. tenuifolium* (Slender Mountain Mint), to 4 feet and 3 feet respectively, are easily grown but seldom used. They are perhaps shunned by gardeners wary of their aggressive tendencies. White hemispherical flat-topped clusters with pale pink, spotted florets are surrounded by large, silvery bracts that give the plants a delightful frosted appearance. The pointed oval, very aromatic, fresh green leaves have a clean, pungent, minty fragrance. *P. tenuifolium* has narrow, linear leaves with flat-topped clusters of dense white flowers. At Stonecrop, we love the Mountain Mints, both for their simple, understated beauty and their prodigious nectar-producing qualities for a host of insects.

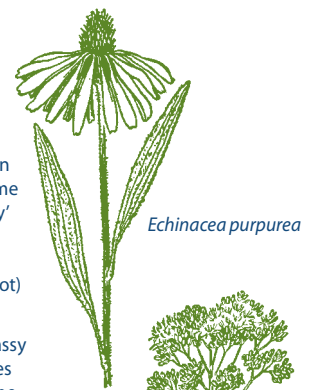
Rudbeckia fulgida (Orange Coneflower) is a very garden-worthy plant reaching approximately 3 feet in height with its early and long-blooming display of solitary 2-inch flowerheads comprised of yellow rays with brownish purple centre discs. Widely available is the cultivar ‘Goldsturm’ with its more compact stature of 2 feet. Those in search of the bigger and bolder should select *R. laciniata* (Tall Coneflower) or *R. subtomentosa* (Sweet Black-eyed Susan), which will provide masses of late summer yellow daisies for the back of the border.

Solidago rugosa (Rough-stemmed Goldenrod) has made the voyage out of the “strictly wildflower” category thanks to the promotion of the outstanding compact and floriferous variety ‘Fireworks’. This cultivar features shooting sprays of dense, tiny, bright yellow flowers borne on stiff, alternate-leaved stems typically reaching 3½ to 4 feet tall. The overall effect is unique and resembles exploding fireworks, hence the cultivar name. Other garden-worthy goldenrods worth a second look include *S. caesia* (Blue-stemmed Goldenrod) for the woodland edge, and *S. speciosa* (Showy Goldenrod), a naturally occurring robust tetraploid plant with showy, 10-inch conical blooms of soft yellow that are quite spectacular.

Vernonia noveboracensis (New York Ironweed) is arguably the best of an excellent group of native ironweeds, all given their name due to the rusty colour of the persistent, ripe seed heads. The tall, strong stems with dark green, lance-like leaves are late to emerge in spring but quickly rise to 6 feet or more, and are topped in late summer with clusters of deep purple, thistle-like florets. While usually found in wetter areas in the wild, all ironweeds are remarkably adaptable to garden cultivation.

Zizia aurea (Golden Alexanders) provides a show of rich yellow, flat-topped umbels in late spring, right when the deciduous woodland is beginning to leaf out. This relative of Queen Anne’s Lace reaches a height of 2½ feet and is an equally rugged, easygoing plant with a long season of bloom. *Zizia* is one of the larval food plants for the splendid Black Swallowtail butterfly.

This list is by no means inclusive of the many wonderful and easily grown native plants. I have tried to include some of my personal favourites and those that can be easily found at most nurseries. For those with mostly woodland gardens, this list will be sadly deficient, but stay tuned for Part II, Woodland Natives.



Echinacea purpurea



Eupatorium purpureum



Panicum virgatum



Vernonia noveboracensis



Zizia aurea

Six of Stonecrop's Favourite Flower Garden Dahlias

Dahlia 'Honka'



(Single Orchid/Star)

Dahlia 'Amber Queen'



(Pompon)

Yellow Rainbow

Dahlia 'Orion'



(Formal Decorative)

Birch Bed

Dahlia 'Bishop of Llandaff'



(Peony-flowering)

Red Rainbow & Red Bed

Dahlia 'Cha-Cha'



(Semi-Cactus)

Pink/Chartreuse

Dahlia 'Pooh'



(Collerette)

Red/Orange/Yellow (ROY)

Grown in: Yellow Pie

Grow Delightful, Dazzling Dahlias

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Where to buy... order early for 2010

Connell's
www.connells-dahlias.com

Swan Island
www.dahlias.com

Dan's Dahlias
www.dansdahlias.com

Where to visit

Planting Fields, Oyster Bay, NY
www.plantingfields.org

Bayard Cutting Arboretum,
Great River, NY
www.bayardcuttingarboretum.com

Eisenhower Park,
East Meadow, NY

develop a longer stem thus lifting the opening flower well above the foliage. The two side shoots below the terminal bud should also be removed to encourage the growth of the terminal flower and of the stem. If bigger and better blooms are required for show, more side shoots lower down the stem can be removed. In the case of giants, all the side shoots can be removed, perhaps leaving the lowest to survive to produce a replacement flower later on in the season. Most small and miniature types can be allowed to carry all the side shoots produced by the plant, resulting in an abundance of blossoms. Throughout the flowering period, those flowers past their best should be removed; deadheading encourages new flowers to develop.

Cutting dahlias for display in the house or for show is best done either early morning or late evening. A sloping cut should be made and the blooms placed immediately in a container of cold water.

Lifting and Storing Tubers

Once the foliage is cut back after frost, the tubers should be lifted. Remove all soil and debris and allow the surface moisture to dry out—we simply leave our tubers to dry overnight. Once dry, inspect the tubers for any signs of rot or softness before storing them for the winter. When sorting your tubers remember to keep them well labelled, as all dahlia tubers look alike! At Stonecrop we pot up the tubers into pots of dry soil but they can be stored in any cool, frost-free environment.



Lifting tubers for winter storage

All that is needed is protection against freezing and regular inspection against rotting. In general, tubers will survive quite cold temperatures, providing they are kept dry.

At Stonecrop, we grow over 60 dahlias—all shapes, all sizes and colours—in the Flower Garden, where they are a major contributor from summer through fall.

Dahlia Timeline



Earliest drawing of a Mexican Chief with symbolic dahlia headdress.

1410s The Aztecs cultivated the dahlia for food, ceremonies, decorative purposes, and medicinal treatment. The great Aztec emperor Moctezuma himself owned wonderful dahlia gardens. The dahlia flower was worn as a solar symbol by Moctezuma (c. 1466–June 1520) and his nobles.

1529 Friar Bernardino de Sahagún arrived in Mexico and would later write the first known description of the dahlia.

1570 Francisco Hernández, physician to Philip II of Spain, was the first trained scientist to undertake scientific work in the New World. He wrote the *Natural History of New Spain*, the result of his seven-year research on the native plants and animals of New Spain. In this *magnum opus* he described 3,000 plants previously unknown in Europe including extensive references to the many colours and sizes of dahlias he found. Hernández died in 1587 before he could publish his *Natural History*, and the materials were placed in The Escorial, Madrid, where they were extensively consulted, copied,

abstracted, and translated by generations of scientists, medical specialists, and natural philosophers before they were destroyed by fire in 1671.

1597 John Gerard (1545–1612) published *The Herbal or General History of Plants*. This work is best known for its amalgamation of horticultural lore and its collection of medical "virtues" of plants. It has remained popular for over 500 years.

1753 Carl Linnaeus, the Swedish Professor of Medicine and Botany, published his definitive works *Genera Plantarum* and *Species Plantarum*, classifying each plant by using two words (binomial) in Latin form, instead of adopting the descriptive phrases that had been in common use among the botanists and herbalists of his day. This work is the primary starting point of **plant nomenclature** as it exists today. The Linnaeus Garden at Uppsala University Botanical Garden is a living monument to his work.

1787 Nicholas Joseph Thierry de Menonville was sent to Mexico to secure for France the cochineal insect and in that year published a treatise in which he described the dahlias he had seen in a garden near Oaxaca.

1789 French Revolution

Don Vicente Cervantes, the first Professor of Botany at the Royal Botanic Garden in Mexico City, sent dahlia seeds to his friend Abbé Cavanilles (1745–1804) at the Madrid Botanical Garden. These plants were successfully flowered in the fall of 1790.

1791 Abbé Cavanilles published *Icones et Descriptiones Plantarum*, Vol. 1, in which he dedicated the genus *Dahlia* to Andre Dahl, a Swedish botanist. Abbé Cavanilles named the multi-ray plant raised from the seed that Cervantes had sent, *Dahlia pinnata*.



Dahlia pinnata



Dahlia coccinea



Dahlia rosea

1795 Abbé Cavanilles published *Icones et Descriptiones Plantarum*, Vol. 3 in October. Two more dahlia species, *D. coccinea* and *D. rosea*, were added.

1798 The wife of the British Ambassador of Spain, the Marchioness of Bute, acquired specimens of dahlia (*coccinea*, *pinnata*, and *rosea*) and delivered them to The Royal Botanic Gardens Kew.

1802 John Fraser (1750–1811) founder of the American Nursery of Sloane Square in Chelsea in 1780, obtained *D. coccinea* from France and flowered it the following year. A coloured plate and description of the dahlia appeared in *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* of 1804.

1804 Frederick Alexander von Humboldt sent dahlia seed from Mexico to Professor Willdenow, the leading botanist at the Berlin Botanical Garden. Professor Willdenow grew flowers and described the resulting plants. When preparing a revision for the 4th edition of Linnaeus' *Species Plantarum*, the Professor changed the genus name from *Dahlia* to *Georgina*, in honour of a Russian botanist, Professor Georgi. Willdenow believed the name *Dahlia* had already been used for a genus of the Hamamelidaceae family. This caused endless confusion in the horticultural world; dahlias are still often referred to under this name in Eastern Europe.

1804 Lady Holland when visiting Spain sent seed to Holland House, London. These seeds became the main source for the cultivation of garden dahlias in Britain.

Lord Holland's husbandly doggerel celebrating the introduction of the dahlia into England by his wife in 1804:

*The Dahlia you brought to our Isle
Your praises forever shall speak;
Mid gardens as sweet as your smile,
And colour as bright as your cheek.*

1805 Battle of Trafalgar

Lady Holland's librarian raised two seedlings from Lady Holland's *Dahlia pinnata*.

1806 British Botanist Richard Salisbury (1761–1829) received dahlia seed from Lady Holland's garden.

John Wedgewood (1766–1844) founder of the Royal Horticultural Society, grew

Dahlia Fun Facts

The dahlia is the national flower of Mexico. The Mexican Association of the Dahlia celebrates the national Day of the Dahlia on the 4th of August.

The dahlia is the official flower of the city of Seattle.

Before insulin, diabetics were given a substance called Atlantic starch or diabetic sugar made from dahlia tubers.

The genus *Dahlia* is thought to include 36 species that grow in the wild, mainly in Mexico and Guatemala.

Dahlia tubers were used as a food by Mexican Indians.

The stems of *Dahlia imperialis*, which can exceed 25 feet, were used as water pipes by the Aztecs. The Aztecs called them "acocotli" or "cocoxtli," meaning hollow pipe or water tubes.

Dahlias are used as food plants by the larvae of some Lepidoptera species including Angle Shades, Common Swift, Ghost Moth, and Large Yellow Underwing.

Dahlia flowers can be as small as 1 inch in diameter or, in the case of the "dinner plate," up to a foot. The great variety results from dahlias being octoploids; they have eight sets of homologous chromosomes, whereas most plants have only two.

Owing to their star shape, dahlias were linked by the Aztecs to religious rituals associated with the sun.

It has been estimated that there are over 40,000 named dahlia varieties, a testament to the development efforts for this remarkable flower over the years.

History of the Dahlia

The dahlia was named by Abbé Cavanille in honour of Andreas (Anders) Dahl, Swedish scientist and pupil of Carl Linnaeus. Born on March 17, 1751, in Västergötland, Sweden, Dahl was the son of the preacher Christoffer Dahl and his wife Johanna Helena Enegren. On April 3, 1770, Andreas Dahl entered the University of Uppsala, where he studied under Carl Linnaeus. Forced to interrupt his education when his father died in 1771, Dahl resumed his studies in 1776, when he passed an examination to study medicine.

In 1786 Dahl received an honorary degree of medicine in Kiel, and in 1787 he became associate professor and botanical demonstrator at the University of Turku (Åbo). To Turku he brought his herbarium, which later was destroyed in the Great Fire of Turku in 1827. Parts of Dahl's collections are preserved and kept in Sahlberg's Herbarium in the Botanical Museum at the University of Helsinki and in Giseke's Herbarium in the Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh. Dahl died in 1789 in Turku at the age of 38.

dahlia plants for the first time.

1808 Richard Salisbury wrote for the Horticultural Society (later the Royal Horticultural Society) on the different species of dahlia and the best method of cultivation in Great Britain.

1814 First double dahlia bred in England.

1826 60 varieties of dahlias cultivated in England.

1836 The first Dahlia Register, which listed 700 varieties, was published by the Horticultural Society of London (now the Royal Horticultural Society).

1840's The disastrous potato blight invaded Europe. The French hoped the dahlia tuber might serve as a substitute, but it was not palatable. Nevertheless, cultivation of the dahlia continued for the beauty of its flower.

1841 1,200 varieties of dahlias commercially available.

1861-1865 The American Civil War

1879 First cactus dahlia cultivated (*D. juarezii*).

1881 The National Dahlia Society of Great Britain was formed.

1900 First collerette, *Dahlia* 'President Viger', was produced in France.

1906 New England Dahlia Society, which became the American Dahlia Society (ADS) in 1915, was chartered.

1914-1918 First World War

1914 Single Orchid (Star) dahlias were introduced by Cheal & Sons, Crawley, England.

1919 Orchid-flowered dahlias were introduced from France.

1921 First "Official Classification of Dahlias" was published in the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, including 16 classes.

1925 ADS accepted the RHS classification and modern American dahlia growing begins.

1939-1945 Second World War

1969 Paul D. Sørensen published a revision of the genus *Dahlia* that proposed 27 species, including eight previously unreported species.

1995 Jen P. Hjerting, Paul D. Sørensen and Dayle Saar of Northern Illinois University travelled through Mexico collecting species dahlias. They added six more species to the list, and their research has been ongoing.

Summer at Stonecrop

Right, Michael Hagen gives guided tour to the Somerset & Hunterdon Master Gardener Association. Below, member John Tweddle and guests study their plant lists at the Garden Party.

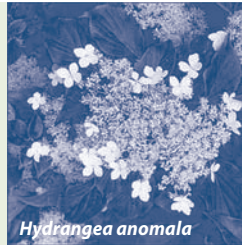


Above, Stonecrop members Janice Bortree and Minu Chaudhuri enjoy the Flower Garden at the Garden Party. Below, final tour of the season for the American Horticultural Society travel study program, *Gardens and Art of the Historic Hudson Highlands*.



Hydrangea anomala subsp. petiolaris

COMMON NAME: Climbing Hydrangea
FAMILY: Hydrangeaceae
NATIVE HABITAT: Japan and Korea



Cholmondeley overshadowed by a mature specimen of Climbing Hydrangea

Visitors often arrive at Stonecrop with a purpose. In the beginning of the season, Spring Under Glass week brings people out of the long winter to experience colours and scents reminding them that winter will soon be over. April and May bring alpine enthusiasts from all over the country to see rare specimens of saxifrages and the tight *Gypsophila aretioides* 'Caucasica'. The majestic *Gunnera manicata* brings visitors throughout the summer and fall ready to have their pictures taken beneath the largest herbaceous perennial, and as the autumn settles in, the fall colour brings leaf peepers with cameras in hand. Regardless of the time of year, one plant always stands out to visitors at Stonecrop. *Hydrangea anomala* subsp. *petiolaris* (Climbing Hydrangea) is considered the ultimate flowering vine at Stonecrop and can be seen clinging to tall trees, climbing over fences, happily ambling over the Flower Garden tool shed and blanketing the ground in the Gravel Garden. With its attractive foliage, long-lasting fragrant flowers, and the ability to grow on almost anything, the Climbing Hydrangea is a must-have for every garden.

Hydrangea anomala subsp. *petiolaris* is a deciduous climbing vine that is hardy in Zones 4-8. Aerial roots allow the vine to cling to any surface, without hurting it, and it can slowly grow up to 80 feet tall. The Climbing Hydrangea is adaptable to a variety of soils but performs best in humus-rich, acidic, well-drained soil in part shade to full shade, but will tolerate full sun if provided with moist soil conditions. While initially slow growing, once established the vine will continue to grow at a moderate speed.

Beginning in early spring, glossy dark green leaves appear on long petioles, immediately drawing attention to this unique vine, which provides three seasons of attraction. The simple broad-ovate, opposite leaves are approximately 2 to 4 inches in both length and width with an acute to acuminate tip and serrated margins. In late June, the 6 to 10-inch diameter flattened white corymbs begin to bloom, sweetly fragrant against the dark foliage, creating a magnificent overall effect. Each corymb is comprised of tiny, dull white, fertile flowers with showy, sterile outer sepals approximately 1 to 1¼ inches across,

creating an outer ring. As the autumn months approach, the muted gold of the Climbing Hydrangea becomes a brilliant yellow. Trees festooned with this vine light the Woodland paths like bright beacons. Meanwhile the flowers, which typically persist for up to six weeks after blooming, begin to fade to green, then brown and last throughout the winter, descending only as the snow falls on them. When all the leaves and flowers have fallen from the vine, the reddish-brown exfoliating bark of older specimens is revealed, yet another wonderful characteristic of a vine that already has so many merits.

Propagating *Hydrangea anomala* subsp. *petiolaris* is easily done by semi-ripe cuttings taken in the summertime or by layering. Luckily, this lovely and useful vine is also readily available from any reputable nursery.

Whatever the reason for a visit to Stonecrop, or whatever the time of year, be sure to look up and see our Climbing Hydrangeas towering above you.

—Amy Pelletier-Clark,
Horticulture and Education Coordinator

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Stonecrop Gardens A twelve-acre paradise for the plant enthusiast



Stonecrop Gardens
81 Stonecrop Lane
Cold Spring, New York 10516

"My time at Stonecrop will always be remembered as an amazing learning experience."

—Gabrielle Homola, Stonecrop's Summer Intern

March 27, 2010

Members' Preview Party: Spring Under Glass, 12 p.m.–4 p.m.

March 29–April 3, 2010

Stonecrop opens for the season with Spring Under Glass Week
10 a.m.–5 p.m., \$5/members no charge

April 24, 2010

Alpine Plant Sale with Wrightman Alpines, Evermay Nursery and more
10 a.m.–4 p.m., \$5/members no charge