

AHS 2020 Great American Gardeners National Award Winners



THE American Horticultural Society (AHS) is proud to announce the recipients of the Society's 2020 Great American Gardeners Awards. These individuals have contributed significantly to fields such as plant research, garden communication, landscape design, youth gardening, teaching, and commercial horticulture. The awards will be presented June 18 during a ceremony and banquet at River Farm, the AHS's headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. For more information, or to register to attend the ceremony, visit www.ahsgardening.org/awards or call (703) 768-5700.

LIBERTY HYDE BAILEY AWARD

The American Horticultural Society's highest award, the Liberty Hyde Bailey Award is given to an individual who has made significant lifetime contributions to at least three of the following horticultural fields: teaching, research, communications, plant exploration, administration, art, business, and leadership.

Named after Liberty Hyde Bailey (1858–1954), horticulturist, educator, author. First awarded in 1958.

THIS YEAR'S winner of the American Horticultural Society's highest honor, given for career achievements in multiple horticultural disciplines, is **James P. Folsom** of San Marino, California. Since 1987, Folsom has been Director of the Botanical

Gardens at the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens, also in San Marino. He originally joined the Huntington staff in 1984 in the role of assistant curator. Folsom and his wife, Debra—who is also a botanist—raised their children Molly and Jimmy at a home on the Huntington's grounds.

Folsom, whose colleagues call him "Jim," oversees more than a dozen thematic gar-

dens covering 130 acres of the Huntington's 207-acre grounds. He serves as visionary and project head for the development of new gardens and botanical facilities and the restoration of historic gardens and maintenance. Much of his focus is directed toward educational programs that increase public interest and understanding of the science, culture, and history of plants and gardens.

He supervises some 85 staff members, including 10 curators, 40 gardeners, and numerous technicians and other staff, as well as hundreds of volunteers who maintain the botanical collections, provide interpretive programs for visitors, and propagate plants.



ENLARGING THE GARDEN

Some of the most notable additions to the garden under Folsom's tenure include a botanical research and education facility in 2001, the Helen and Peter Bing Children's Garden in 2004, the Rose Hills Foundation Conservatory for Botanical Science in 2005, the Chinese garden—Liu Fang Yuan, or the Garden of Flowing Fragrance—in 2008, as well as the renovation and expansion of the Japanese Garden in 2012. As part of the Huntington's Centennial this year, an expanded Chinese garden is opening to the public, making it one of the largest classical-style Chinese gardens in the world.



The newly expanded Chinese garden at the Huntington will reopen this spring as part of the Huntington's Centennial celebrations.

Folsom has also been instrumental in adding invaluable botanical collections to the Huntington, including, most recently, more than 5,000 orchids donated by the family of the late collector and grower S. Robert Weltz that will help the Huntington become a center for orchid conservation.

“Under Jim Folsom’s guidance, the Huntington’s gardens have achieved an uncannily perfect union of scientifically significant research collections and astonishing artistry,” says Panayoti Kelaidis, Director of Outreach at the Denver Botanic Gardens in Colorado. “Jim has fostered a vibrant culture among his staff and made his garden the envy of our profession.”

FORMATIVE YEARS

Folsom was born in what he describes as the “drop-dead gorgeous small Alabama town of Eufaula,” where he says his lifelong love of plants developed because he “grew up with astonishing freedom to roam and observe.” After high school, he attended nearby Auburn University, graduating with a bachelor’s degree in botany, before serving three years in the United States Air Force. Following his service, he went on to get a master’s degree in biology from Vanderbilt University, and then a doctorate in research botany from the University of Texas at Austin (UTA).

LUTHER BURBANK AWARD

Recognizes extraordinary achievement in the field of plant breeding. Named for Luther Burbank (1849–1926), legendary American plant breeder. First awarded in 1993.

Over the course of his career, **Dan Heims**, president of Terra Nova Nurseries in Canby, Oregon, has become a major leader and influencer in ornamental plant breeding. He started Terra Nova out of his own home in 1992, and the company has since introduced more than 1,000 plants to horticulture. Heims is known in particular for his groundbreaking work with herbaceous perennials such as coral bells (*Heuchera* spp.), foamflowers (*Tiarella* spp.), and coneflowers (*Echinacea* spp.). The company employs more than 100 people, and its plant breeding facility includes a state-of-the-art tissue culture lab.

Heims has written two gardening books and dozens of articles in popular and professional journals. He is a sought after speaker who makes presentations on plant- and horticulture-related topics to professional and amateur groups around the world.

Among the accolades Heims has received is the Award of Merit, the highest honor bestowed by the Perennial Plant Association, as well as the Royal Horticultural Society’s Reginald Cory Memorial Cup, an honor given for breeding work within a specific genus.

DR. H. MARC CATHEY AWARD

Given to an individual for outstanding scientific research that has enriched horticulture and plant science. Named for H. Marc Cathey

While working on his doctorate, he spent several years as a teaching assistant in UTA’s botany department.

Folsom’s botanical and horticultural interests are wide-ranging, but his research in the 1970s and 1980s was largely focused on the orchid family. He did extensive field work in Central and South America, including stints in Costa Rica, Panama, and Peru, as well as a year in Colombia on a Fulbright Pre-Doctoral Fellowship.

Over the course of his career, Folsom authored numerous research papers, articles, and reports in both scientific and popular publications. Some of Folsom’s photos and musings on plants and gardens—including excerpts from *A Botanical Reader*, his free e-book on Apple—are published in a blog called *botanyincontext.com*, which is available on the Huntington’s website.

Folsom has been the recipient of numerous awards. He was named a Friend of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America in 1996, was awarded a Professional Citation by the American Public Gardens Association in 1999, received the Medal of Honor from the Garden Club of America in 2007, and was given the AHS’s Professional Award in 2003. In 2016, he was inducted into the Order of the Rising Sun (Gold Rays with Rosette) by the government of Japan for the Huntington’s assistance in celebrations honoring the centennial of Japan’s gift of cherry trees to the United States in 2012.

(1928–2008), a horticultural scientist who served as President of the American Horticultural Society for many years. First awarded in 1953 as the Scientific Award; renamed in 2000.

A world renowned ethnobotanist at the New York Botanical Garden (NYBG), **Michael J. Balick**, Ph.D., works with indigenous cultures to document plant diversity, preserve knowledge about traditional uses for plants, and help these communities sustainably manage their resources. In the course of this work, he evaluates the potential of these botanical resources for broader medical or pharmaceutical applications. His most recent project focuses on the tropical Pacific Islands in Micronesia and Melanesia, where he is documenting the diversity, local use, and management of plant resources in support of a region-wide conservation plan. Balick is currently vice president for botanical science at NYBG, where he has worked since 1980. He is also



Michael J. Balick, left, with Chief Johnson Noar in the Republic of Vanuatu

director and senior philecology curator of the NYBG Institute of Economic Botany, which he cofounded in 1981.

Balick has published more than 150 scientific papers in peer-reviewed journals. In addition, he has authored or edited 28 scientific and general interest books and monographs.

COMMUNITY GREENING AWARD

Recognizes exemplary contributions by an individual, institution, or company demonstrating the application and value of horticulture in creating livable communities that are greener, healthier, and more equitable. First awarded in 1985 as the Urban Beautification Award; renamed in 2019.

Established by the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County, **Blocks in Bloom** debuted in 2015 in the City of Rochester, New York.



The idea was to build community, enhance property values, and promote healthy living in the city's low-income neighborhoods by providing free plants and gardening instruction to participating residents. The program is led by Master Gardener

volunteers, who train residents to prepare, plant, and maintain their front-yard flower gardens. In 2018, a leadership development component was added, enabling experienced residents to become mentors to new program participants.

The program's success is indicated by its growth from serving two blocks with 15 households in 2015 to serving 15 blocks and 135 households in 2019. By design, the program has a sustainable structure—built around volunteers and donated materials—that makes it easily replicable in other communities.

PAUL ECKE JR. COMMERCIAL AWARD

Given to an individual or company whose commitment to the highest standards of excellence in the field of commercial horticulture contributes to the betterment of gardening practices everywhere. Named for Paul Ecke Jr. (1925–2002), innovator, facilitator, businessman. Formerly known as the Commercial Award, it was first awarded in 1971.

An entrepreneur with an eye for ecological landscaping, **Steve Castorani** cofounded North Creek Nurseries in 1988 and is its president and CEO. The wholesale nursery, based in Landenberg, Pennsylvania, specializes in perennial, fern, vine, and ornamental grass plug production, with an emphasis on Eastern regional native plants. Known for its innovations, the nursery developed and introduced Landscape Plugs™ to the horticulture industry in the early 2000s.



Castorani also co-created the American

Beauties Native Plants® brand, which—through partnerships with organizations like the National Wildlife Federation—has contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to ecofriendly causes. The focus on introducing new native plant species and cultivars has also broadened the diversity and availability of native plants to the general public. Castorani has held leadership positions in plant propagation organizations and serves on several nonprofit boards.

EMERGING HORTICULTURAL PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Recognizes significant achievements and/or leadership that have advanced the field of horticulture in America. First given in 2017.

As the first treeologist-science communication leader at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois, **Jessica B. Turner-Skoff**, Ph.D.,



Jessica Turner-Skoff with two students in a STEM program

is deeply devoted to trees. Having gained an appreciation for the natural world while growing up in rural Ohio, Turner-Skoff earned a bachelor's degree in conservation science at Muskingum University in New Concord, Ohio. She went on to receive a master's degree in sustainable development and conservation biology at the University of Maryland, and in 2015 earned a doctorate in biology from West Virginia University.

Turner-Skoff's role at Morton since she was hired in 2016 is to help the public understand the benefits of trees, explain key concepts about tree science and conservation, and highlight research underway at the arboretum. Among other achievements, Turner-Skoff co-developed and co-hosts Morton's "Planted: Finding Your Roots in STEM Careers" podcast, which introduces students to diverse career options available in the plant sciences. She also holds leadership roles in a number of professional organizations, including Seed Your Future, the Chicago Council on Science and Technology, and the Associated Colleges of the Chicago Area.

HORTICULTURAL THERAPY AWARD

Recognizes significant contributions to the field of horticultural therapy. First given in 1985.

Catharine McCord is a horticultural therapist specializing in sensory and therapeutic garden design and programming. Known for her multidisciplinary approach to horticultural therapy, McCord



blends her landscape design training with her personal passion for mental health awareness, and her interest in herb- and plant-based medical treatments. As the program coordinator for Denver Botanic Gardens' therapeutic horticulture program, McCord helps deliver programming both on-site in the Sensory Garden and off-site at care facilities. She also serves as a sensory garden design con-

sultant in the Metro Denver area, supporting cultural institutions and other non-profits as they plan and build sensory gardens.

In 2017, as part of her master's thesis project, McCord designed a sensory garden for Denver's Sewall Child Development Center. This garden was constructed with the aid of a \$75,000 grant McCord helped secure from the Colorado Garden Foundation. These accomplishments led to her selection as a National Olmsted Scholar Finalist, and invited to present her work at the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture conference held in Beijing, China.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN AWARD

Given to an individual whose work has demonstrated and promoted the value of sound horticultural practices in the field of landscape architecture. First given in 1974.

A landscape designer and writer, **Leslie Bennett** is the owner of Pine House Edible Gardens, an Oakland, California-based



landscape design/build firm that creates aesthetic edible gardens and productive outdoor spaces. Bennett's work entails creating culturally grounded gardens that provide as much visual inspiration as they do organic harvests of food, flowers, and medicinal herbs. Her designs have been featured in *Sunset* magazine, *Better Homes & Gardens*, *Martha Stewart Living*, *Garden Design*, *C Magazine*, *Los Angeles Times*, *San*

Francisco Chronicle, and *Gardenista.com*. She is also co-author of *The Beautiful Edible Garden* (Ten Speed Press, 2013).

Bennett holds degrees from Harvard University, Columbia Law School, and the University College London in the fields of environmental justice, land use law, cultural property, and preservation. She lives in Oakland, California with her husband, Linval, and two children, Samuel and Zeta.

Nominations for 2021 Awards

Help us give recognition to deserving "horticultural champions" by nominating someone you know for one of the 2021 Great American Gardeners Awards. Look for more details in the July/August 2020 issue of this magazine or online on our website at www.ahsgardening.org/awards.

MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

Recognizes a past Board member or friend of the American Horticultural Society for outstanding service in support of the Society's goals, mission, and activities. First awarded in 1980.

J. Landon Reeve IV is recognized for his leadership and dedication to the American Horticultural Society for nearly two decades.



He served on the AHS Board of Directors from 2006 to 2019, and was the organization's treasurer for many of those years. In addition, Reeve's firm Chapel Valley Landscape Company has been providing invaluable maintenance support at the AHS's River Farm headquarters for many years, and is recognized as an AHS Corporate Member.

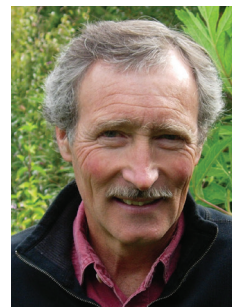
Reeve's career in landscaping started in high school with a part-time summer job at a nursery near his home in Baltimore County, Maryland. After graduating from the University of Maryland with a degree in ornamental horticulture, Reeve and a partner founded a small garden center and landscaping business. In 1968, Reeve struck out on his own and established Chapel Valley, for which he initially was the sole employee. The company, based in Woodbine, Maryland, now employs more than 400 people and has regional offices in Dulles, Virginia, and Canton, Georgia.

Over the course of his career, Reeve also served as president of three major regional trade organizations. He retired from Chapel Valley in 2015 and has been succeeded by his son, James Reeve.

B.Y. MORRISON COMMUNICATIONS AWARD

Recognizes effective and inspirational communication—through print, radio, television, and/or online media—that advances public interest and participation in horticulture. Named for Benjamin Yoe Morrison (1891–1966), landscape architect, plant breeder, artist. Formerly known as the Horticultural Communication Award, it was first awarded in 1987. In 2005, this award merged with the Horticultural Writing Award, which debuted in 1953.

After nearly 30 years as garden communicator in the Pacific Northwest, **Ciscoe Morris** has done it all—from hosting a live radio show,



to making regular appearances on news broadcasts, penning garden columns for Seattle newspapers, giving garden presentations, and writing top-selling gardening books. A trained horticulturist and Master Gardener, Morris spent 24 years as the director of grounds care at Seattle University, where he developed one of the nation's first pesticide-free gardening programs at a university campus. Under his leadership, the university was recog-

nized with two national environmental awards and became the first campus in Washington to be designated a wildlife sanctuary by the State Department of Wildlife.

His most recent book, *Oh, La La!*, released in January 2020, contains garden stories, advice, and humor.

PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Given to a public garden administrator whose achievements during the course of his or her career have cultivated widespread interest in horticulture. First awarded in 1953.

A leading authority on the cultivation and conservation of tropical plants, **Charles “Chipper” Wichman, Jr.**, is president of the National Tropical Botanical Garden (NTBG) in Kalaheo, Hawaii. Wichman has spent more than 40 years with the NTBG, starting as an apprentice gardener in the mid-1970s and working his way up to an executive leadership role in the early 2000s. Over the course of his career, Wichman has amassed an astounding list of accomplishments. These include discovering or rediscovering more than a dozen previously unknown plant species; leading a successful conservation initiative at Limahuli Valley in Hawaii before donating the land—owned by his family—to NTBG for preservation; raising NTBG’s profile as an influential conservation, research, and education center; and helping found the International Center for Tropical Botany at Florida International University in Miami.

In 2018, Wichman was awarded the Garden Club of America’s Medal of Honor for outstanding service to horticulture. He makes presentations on tropical plant conservation to audiences worldwide.

FRANCES JONES POETKER AWARD

Recognizes significant contributions to floral design in publications, on the platform, and to the public. Named for Frances Jones Poetker, floral designer, author, lecturer. First given in 1988.

Nancy Ross Hugo is a floral designer with a passion for wildflowers, weeds, and other important yet underappreciated plants. Hugo, who



lives on a 50-acre farm in Howardsville, Virginia, started flower arranging at age five, when The Buds, an offshoot of her mother’s garden club, encouraged children to create tiny flower arrangements before their mothers’ meetings. During her career, she has taught floral design to amateurs and experts, practiced floral design professionally, and conducted workshops all over the mid-Atlantic.

Beginning in 2011, Hugo began creating small, spare arrangements on her windowsill daily, using this

exercise as a way of connecting to the seasons and exploring the creative process. Over time, she posted over 1,400 of these arrangements on her blog. In 2014, she published *Windowsill Art* to explain her process and to describe techniques and materials particularly well-suited to this art form.

Hugo is also the author of *Remarkable Trees of Virginia*, *Seeing Trees*, and *Trees Up Close*. She has worked as a garden columnist for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, conducted lectures across the eastern United States, and worked as an education manager at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond, Virginia.

JANE L. TAYLOR AWARD

Given to an individual, organization, or program that has inspired and nurtured future horticulturists through efforts in children’s and youth gardening. Named for Jane L. Taylor, youth advocate, horticulturist, educator. First awarded in 2000.

Grow Dat Youth Farm, an urban farm and youth development organization in New Orleans, Louisiana, was founded in 2010 as



a way of nurturing a diverse group of young leaders through the growing of food. The organization works to create a more just and sustainable food system in a region where many people face food

insecurity. In its first year, the program employed 13 student workers who grew 2,200 pounds of food. Today, more than 250 youth leaders have graduated from the farm’s leadership programs, and the farm is producing 25,000 pounds of food annually, 30 percent of which is donated to community partners who help distribute the food where it is needed the most. The organization’s executive director, Devon Turner, is a Louisiana native who has spent her career focused on supporting and advocating for young men and women, including as an educator teaching about social justice issues.

TEACHING AWARD

Given to an individual whose ability to share his or her horticultural knowledge with others has contributed to a better public understanding of the plant world and its important influence on society. First awarded in 1953.

For more than 50 years, **Barry Fugatt**, director of horticulture at the nonprofit Tulsa Garden Center in Oklahoma, has been ed-



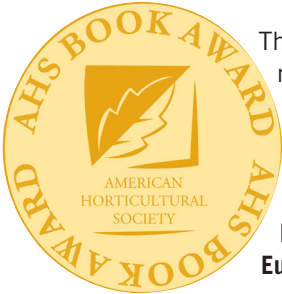
ucating people about plants. Fugatt is known for his passionate and inspiring teaching style, which enables him to get people—even individuals without prior horticultural experience or enthusiasm—engaged with plants. Early in his career, Fugatt was a county Extension agent in ornamental horticulture for Oklahoma State University, where he created its Master Gardener program. He went on to become Extension director before joining the Tulsa Garden Center, an

educational organization, as director of horticulture. Shortly after assuming the position, he created the Linnaeus Teaching Garden and volunteer program; in the last 15 years, the program has graduated over 640 students and maintains 262 active volunteers.

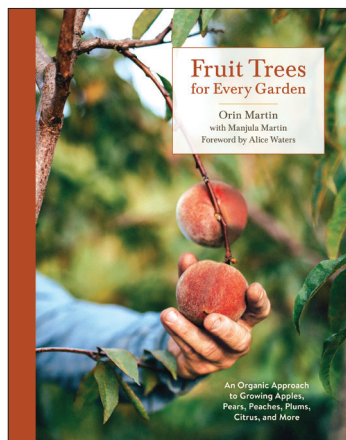
Fugatt is also a skilled garden communicator, contributing regularly to local television programs, presenting at conferences, and writing newspaper articles.

2020 AHS Book Award Winners

Each year, the American Horticultural Society recognizes outstanding gardening books published in North America with its annual Book Award. Nominated books are judged by the AHS Book Award Committee on qualities such as writing style, authority, accuracy, and physical quality. This year's award recipients, selected from books published in 2019, are listed below.

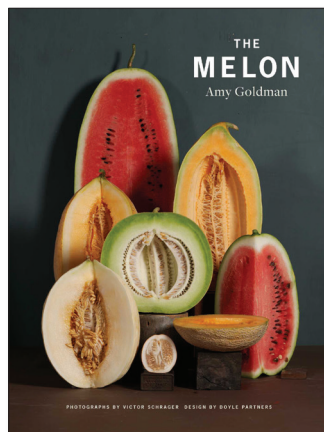


The 2019 Book Award Committee was chaired by **Deb Wiley**, a garden writer, editor, and book project manager in Des Moines, Iowa. Other members were: **William Aldrich**, founder and former editor of *Chicagoland Gardening*, from Springfield, Missouri; **Catriona Tudor Erler**, a garden writer, photographer, and book author based in Charlottesville, Virginia; **Nancy Rose**, horticulturist and former editor of *Arnoldia*, published by the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts; **Amy Campion**, a freelance garden writer, photographer, and blogger in Portland, Oregon; **Kim Toscano Holmes**, a garden educator, communicator, and designer based in Stillwater, Oklahoma; and **Susan Eubank**, a horticultural librarian at the Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden in California.



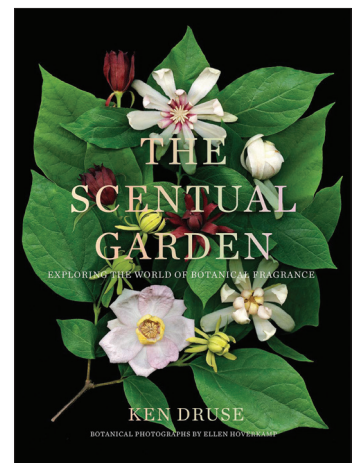
Fruit Trees for Every Garden:
An Organic Approach to Growing Apples, Pears, Peaches, Plums, Citrus, and More
by Orin Martin with Manjula Martin.
Ten Speed Press.

■ Judges praised this book for its detailed information on growing fruit trees. Amy Campion described it as “a no-nonsense guide for beginning fruit tree growers using the French intensive method of the late Alan Chadwick.” Bill Aldrich noted that while the authors’ overall expertise was evident, “what distinguished this book was the extensive pruning section. Backyard gardeners have little experience in how essential proper pruning is to the eventual size of their crops.” Kim Toscano Holmes said, “Few books provide such detail regarding fruit tree pruning, and I appreciated the honest assessment of available cultivars.”



The Melon
by Amy Goldman. Photographs by Victor Schrage. City Point Press.

■ Amy Goldman’s personal commitment to growing and preserving heirloom melons, along with her clear expertise, pushed this book into the winner’s circle. “Meticulously researched, masterfully written, and beautifully illustrated, *The Melon* showcases the remarkable diversity within this group of delectable fruits. It was a joy to read,” said Campion. “*The Melon* warmed my soul the instant I opened the book,” said Holmes. “I was delighted to find a wealth of information accompanying the beautiful photography.”



The Scentual Garden:
Exploring the World of Botanical Fragrance
by Ken Druse. Botanical photographs by Ellen Hoverkamp. Abrams.

■ Committee members were impressed with Ken Druse’s attempt to classify and describe plant scents. “Obviously this is a difficult task, because scent is very individually perceived, but I think he did a very good job,” said Nancy Rose. “A thorough exploration of a subject that has the potential to add a great deal of pleasure to our gardens,” said Campion. “This book will have you sniffing all your garden plants to determine if you can pick up on all the nuances that Druse’s keen nose can detect!” “Having a language you can apply to scent is very valuable,” said Deb Wiley, who called the book “elegant and edifying.”