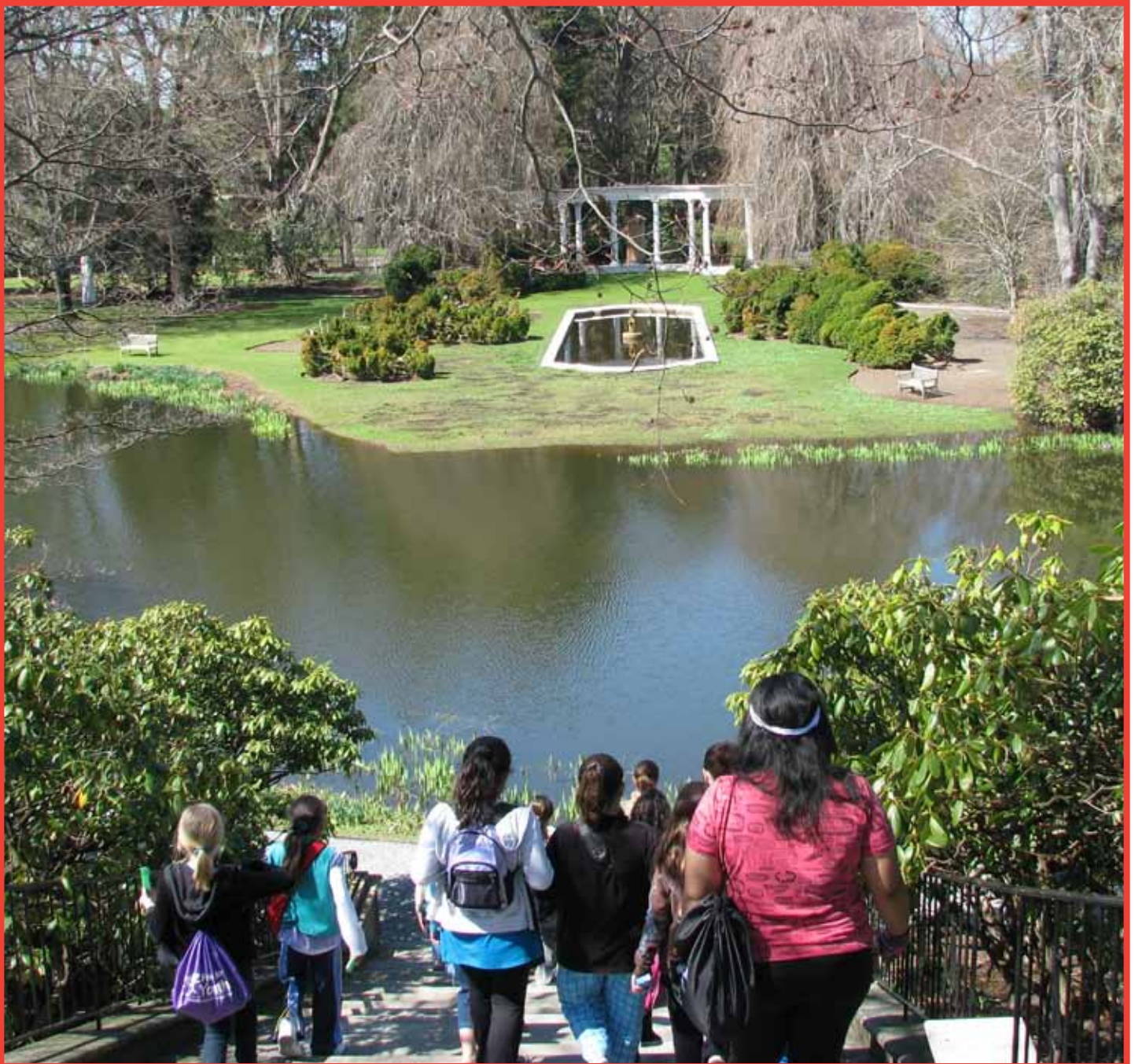


# *Old Westbury Gardens News*

Clippings from the Gardens, Fall 2011



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## Chairman's Letter

Now that we soon will be nearing the end of another wonderful year, I have to say that I am full of enthusiasm, bursting with it in fact, for all that is going on at Old Westbury Gardens. The leadership of John Norbeck, the care with which our staff plans and presents events and finds imaginative usage of our house and grounds, and the helpful input from trustees, advisors, special guests and other visitors, makes me feel quite comfortable about the seasons to come.

There is a vibrancy that keeps Old Westbury Gardens relevant and lively

while always respecting its storied past. There is a continuum, an unbroken line of appreciation of the intrinsic qualities of the early 20th century English country-style estate begun by Jay and Dita Phipps to the founding of Old Westbury Gardens through today. The stables are gone, there are no more polo horses in the paddocks, and the tennis house is a distant memory. But the legacy lives on.

I'm especially pleased that a young and spirited group of voices has joined the leadership of the Gardens. (It seems not so long ago when I was the one being referred to as "the youngest," whether in my

family or at Old Westbury Gardens). We welcome this generation and your capabilities, including your acumen with the latest communications technology. You have succeeded in balancing an appreciation for our history while promoting fresh ideas and bringing renewed energy to our committees.

And of course, we welcome you, our members. The leaves have changed, and the chill is in the air. But there are still a few weeks left to enjoy this amazing place. But if not, there is always next year.



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## President's Letter

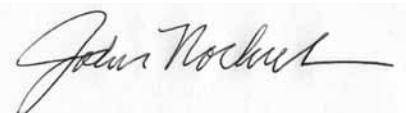
Many organizations have brochures, web sites, or press releases that briefly describe their events. That's not easy to do at Old Westbury Gardens, as there is no succinct way of summarizing what this wonderful place is all about. This puts me in mind of one of my favorite Gardens' stories. Our chairman, Mary Phipps, was once asked by a visitor, "What's going on at the Gardens?" Mary's reply was, "What's NOT going on at the Gardens?"

Our house and grounds are justly acknowledged as being among the most beautiful in the world. In this incredible setting, we offer an astounding variety of events. You can take a class in floral design, see antique autos, have a picnic and dance to the music of a live orchestra, take a bat walk or bug safari, toss a caber, tour a scarecrow garden,

participate in Nanny Night, and enjoy an elegant tea, just to name a few perennial favorites. New events this year were an art exhibition, children's programs that included Seeds for Thought and Goodnight Gardens, and a collections tour by noted English furniture restorer, Philip Barker.

And there's still more to come. By popular request, we are again hosting Home for the Holidays: A Designer Showhouse. Shortly after those talented decorators work their wonders at Orchard Hill, our own creative staff will work theirs for our holiday celebration at Westbury House.

Check our website, keep your calendar handy, or give our staff a call. Our hope is that if someone asks you what is happening at OWG, your reply will be the same as our chairman's.



## Home for the Holidays

The Preview Party for the Designer Showhouse at Orchard Hill is being held on Saturday, November 5, from 6:00-8:00pm. This is a great opportunity to see the beautifully decorated rooms before they are open to the public, and to meet with the designers. Register online at [www.oldwestburygardens.org](http://www.oldwestburygardens.org), or call 516-333-0048.



*Attendees at last year's party included Mario Buatta and Duane Hampton above, Barbara Bancroft and Jamie Figg, far left, and Debra Norville and Karl Wellner, left*

*Party images are by Patrick McMullan*

## Art in the Ballroom

During a weekend in September, the Red Ballroom was transformed into an art gallery as local artist David Peikon displayed some of his favorite paintings. The well attended exhibition was a great success, and thirty percent of sales were donated to Old Westbury Gardens. Peikon, who regularly uses scenes of Old Westbury Gardens as his inspiration, related to a local news reporter that having a show at Westbury House was "the greatest honor in my 15 years as a painter."



*At left, David and Terry Peikon, above, Mary Phipps, Chairman of Old Westbury Gardens, with Dr. James Watson*

## Champions for Charity®

On Thursday, December 1, through Saturday, December 3, participating stores in the Americana Manhasset and Wheatley Plaza shopping centers are hosting this year's Champions for Charity®. Through this holiday shopping benefit program, upon presentation of a Champion Card, 25% of your pre-tax purchases will be

donated to Old Westbury Gardens, or another charity of your choice.

To register for your complimentary Champion Card and for more information about Champions for Charity®, visit [championsforcharity.org](http://championsforcharity.org), call 516-627-2277, or visit Americana Manhasset's Concierge Store.

## On the Road with the Friends

In July, the Friends of Old Westbury Gardens took a road trip to the Hamptons to tour several private and noteworthy homes. The first stop was the historic Greek Revival Sag Harbor home of Joy Lewis. Built in 1830 by Charles T. Dering, the home has been restored and filled with important local furniture and paintings collected by Mrs. Lewis and her husband. The group also enjoyed a visit to Hertenhof, an elegant East Hampton home owned by two particularly gracious hosts, Peter Van Hattum and Harold Simmonds, who, acting as their own architects, interior designers, and landscape planners, have decorated the house with English, French, and Dutch antiques with modern touches. The final stop was a lavish alfresco luncheon at the home of Old Westbury Gardens' trustee, Anne Byers. Proceeds from the trip will help the restoration and painting of the windows and molding on the service entrance (East) side of Westbury House. This project was voted on by the Friends at their September, 2011 meeting.

The Friends are an important group of supporters who share a special interest in historic houses and gardens. Through a series of events, such as the Hamptons Road Trip, they raise essential funds for select projects at Old Westbury Gardens. Benefits of Friends membership include invitations to monthly meetings, unique trips, lectures, and other special programs. Upcoming events include a Holiday Luncheon on the West Porch, a Broadway theatre trip, and a road trip to Kykuit, the Rockefeller Estate in the Hudson Valley. Next fall there will be a special tour of the home of Ina Garten, who many of you may know better as the Barefoot Contessa.

If you would like more information about joining the Gardens at the Friends member level, please contact Jana Ryan at 516.333.0048 ext. 309, [jryan@oldwestburygardens.org](mailto:jryan@oldwestburygardens.org).

*The Friends at Anne Byers's house, right, and below, at last year's Holiday Luncheon*



## 2011 Golf Outing

On June 28, in picture-perfect weather, Old Westbury Gardens held our fourth annual golf outing at Deepdale Golf Club in Manhasset. This event, the most financially successful golf outing we've ever had, was chaired by Jack Foley, with honorary chairs Kim and Payson Coleman.

The Gardens would like to thank our loyal sponsors, the Pall Corporation for brunch, and the Americana Manhasset for dinner. Classic Sponsors included Kim and Payson Coleman, Stephanie and Chase Coleman, The Griffon Corporation, Mary and Howdy Phipps, and Wells Fargo. The winners of the raffle prize, a trip to Palm Springs, were Harvey and Maryann Bernstein.

## December Dinner Party

Old Westbury Gardens' December Dinner Party will be held on December 2. Now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year, the event will raise funds for preservation projects. The chairs are Elaine and Steven Schwartzreich. Elaine is a Trustee of Old Westbury Gardens and was a long time president of the Friends of Old Westbury Gardens.

In 2011, funds that were raised at last year's party were used to make repairs to the furniture collection, repair the roof of the Thatched Cottage, begin the renovation of the Boxwood Garden, and complete funding for a Cultural Landscape Report, an important preservation tool for continuing the original design of the gardens.

This year's honoree is Patricia Montgomerie, an Advisor to the Board of Trustees. Patricia's mother, Patricia Corey,

created a long family tradition of actively participating in period room restoration. Patricia Montgomerie has taken the lead in her role with the Friends of Old Westbury Gardens in suggesting projects of the greatest and most immediate need and insuring that financial resources are provided. Patricia also was responsible for producing the original Picnic Pops programs, creating holiday decorations for Westbury House, and for the establishment of the costume collection.

For more information about how you could show your support for Patricia and her love of Westbury House, please contact Doreen Banks at 333-0048, ext 335.



*Steven and Elaine Schwartzreich*



*Above, Horticulture Director Maura Brush and Operations Director Pete DiBlasi, at right, some of the damage from Hurricane Irene on the Primrose Path*

## True-ly Good Tools

Harvey Blau, the husband of Old Westbury Gardens' Trustee Arlene Blau, is the Chairman of the Board of Griffon Corporation in Manhattan. Griffon owns the Ames True Temper Company, a manufacturer of fine lawn and garden tools for over 230 years. In September, Harvey contacted us, offering a donation of \$10,000 worth of their products. Shortly thereafter, and just in time to help with the massive grounds cleanup after Hurricane Irene, an Ames True Temper Tools truck arrived at Old Westbury Gardens. Six large pallets stacked with boxes filled with everything from huge wheelbarrows to small, specialty hand tools were delivered to the delighted Horticulture and Operations Departments.



## Preservation News

By Lorraine Gilligan

### Outside

The reconstruction of the limestone kneewall is the third phase of restoration of the entry courtyard to Westbury House. Over time, the brick foundation and steel straps that secure the limestone slabs on either side of the wall had deteriorated causing the slabs to be unstable and ready to dislodge and break. A new cement block interior wall and stainless steel straps will provide a long term solution to the integrity of the walls.



### And Inside

Over a century ago, George Crawley designed the house and grounds of the J.S. Phipps Estate. But the job remained incomplete until he appointed Westbury House with fine furnishings, paintings, and textiles, giving the period rooms their unique character. Though now so very familiar to us, that character evolved over a great amount of time, and the task of caring for its different elements, especially the furniture, is based upon many factors. Among these is the interior climate of the house, which has an enormous effect on how furniture reacts to and survives centuries of use.

This summer, we were paid a visit by Philip Barker from the UK. A remarkable, fourth generation craftsman with an irrepressible love of the exceptional qualities and details of fine furniture, Mr. Barker has excelled at his trade for over 30 years, caring for both private and museum collections worldwide. He spent quite a busy week cleaning, repairing, and waxing pieces throughout the house. At a special reception held at the end of his stay, Mr. Barker shared some of his extensive knowledge with our guests. Among many other things, he feels that the maintenance of furniture is most successful when performed on a regular basis, and when there is protection from direct sunlight and heating elements. He

also recommends that the repair process can be simplified by always taking care to save the bits and pieces that are typically found on the floor when furniture is damaged or is drying out.

Mr. Barker's visit was funded through the generosity of donors contributing to a collections fund at the annual December Dinner fundraiser. Collections care is a slow and exacting process, and Mr. Barker still has much to accomplish at Westbury House. We look forward to his return and are proud of the commitment Old Westbury Gardens has made to caring for the John S. Phipps collection, one that remains unique among historic houses and gardens.



*Above, Mr. Barker at work in the Dining Room, at left, the tools of the trade.*

## Docent Profile

Dan Mahony has been a volunteering fixture at Old Westbury Gardens for almost two decades. A retired teacher and lifetime resident of Bellerose, Queens, Dan has worked as a garden tour guide, in the Plant Shop, and for the last 10 years, through giving house tours.

But for most of his tenure here, Dan has also performed another vital role at Westbury House. And though he is seldom visually recognized when "out of character," occasionally his voice gives him away. Every once in a while toward the end of a tour, visitors whose kids, or who they themselves, may have sat on Dan's lap at some point in the last 17 years will happily exclaim,

"You're Santa Claus."

"I find young children to be fascinating," said Dan. "They especially like hearing stories about Pomplamoose, one of Santa's elves. Pomplamoose has a reputation as being just a little bit naughty, and the kids seem to be able to relate to that."

With great regret, Dan's health problems have forced him to retire from the job he so much enjoys and looks forward to every December. As he explained, "I have Parkinson's, and I can't take the chance that I might fall with one of the kids." But thankfully, Dan will continue to volunteer at Westbury House for as long as he is able. And he will no doubt continue to regularly receive cards and

letters from grateful kids and parents everywhere for all the wonderful memories he has provided.



*Dan Mahony, in and out of costume*



## Happy Retirement, John DeMaille



Speaking of Santa Claus, John DeMaille, who retired in July, was a real long timer at the Gardens, having started here in February, 1981. As Master Carpenter, John had worked on countless projects over the last 30 years, from rebuilding the log cabins near the Cottage Garden, refurbishing the Pergola and Trellis, recreating the Walled Garden at various exhibitions (including at Rockefeller Center in 1995), to virtually anything made of wood on our extensive grounds.

John is also a master of the steel pedal guitar. And though he has hung up his tool belt, he and his wife will continue to belt out songs while touring the tri-state area with his Country Western Band, Darlene Prince and the Bragg Hollow Band.

## **In Loving Memory**

### **Linda Holmes**

The last residence for Linda Holmes, who died on August 6, was in Oyster Bay Cove, where she had lived for several years. This was a little unusual. Linda didn't typically stay in a particular village for too long. Through the company she founded, Linda Holmes Ltd., she would regularly refurbish whatever house she happened to be living in, flip it for a profit, and move on to the

next project. Linda was very handy, to say the least, so much so that she taught shop classes at The Green Vale School in Old Brookville. She also managed to volunteer her energy and give financial support to various animal rescue groups, particularly the ASPCA. And in her spare time, since 2002, Linda ran our Gift Shop, stocking the shelves with the unique, hard-to-find presents, Christmas tree ornaments, and other items that visitors to Westbury House have grown used to finding here.

### **Patricia Sullivan**

Following a Westbury House visit by the Long Island Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the members decided to send a letter of thanks. They especially wanted to "commend our tour guide, Patti Sullivan, on her knowledge and expertise. Our architects were impressed with her in-depth knowledge of art history and architecture and the enthusiasm she exuded in showing the house." That letter was written in 1988, a mere four years into the 27 years of volunteer service that Patricia would provide for the Gardens.

Although she also gave garden tours, few people were ever better suited to giving house tours than Patricia. Her education included a Bachelor of Science in Communications, a Master's in English, *and* a Master's in Library Science. Patricia loved doing research, whether at Molloy College, where she was Assistant Director of Instructional and Reference Services, or here at the Gardens where she essentially was the "go-to person" for anyone who wanted to get information about the house or grounds, no matter how obscure.

Patricia continued to give house tours practically right up to the day she was taken from us on August 12.

### **Oz Kaufold**

In lieu of flowers, anyone who wished to make a donation in memory of Oz Kaufold, who died on October 4, was asked to make a donation to The Stage Theater in Merrick. As is certainly the case at Old Westbury Gardens, Oz will be very fondly remembered at The Stage, where he appeared in a variety of productions. He also enjoyed acting at his Alma Mater, Hofstra, as well as at the dozens of other theaters where he performed in countless roles during his 60 year acting career.

Oz also graced the stage here at the Gar-

dens on Wednesday afternoons. His professional training, resonant voice, and finely tuned mannerisms blended wonderfully to delight visitors with the dramatic nature of his garden tours as much as he impressed them with his extensive knowledge of the grounds. Yet, ironically, Oz wasn't acting. He was just telling the truth. Clearly, he obviously enjoyed showing people around at this beautiful place, and in the process gave what were probably his finest performances.

Linda, Patricia, and Oz will be sorely missed.



## USA at OWG

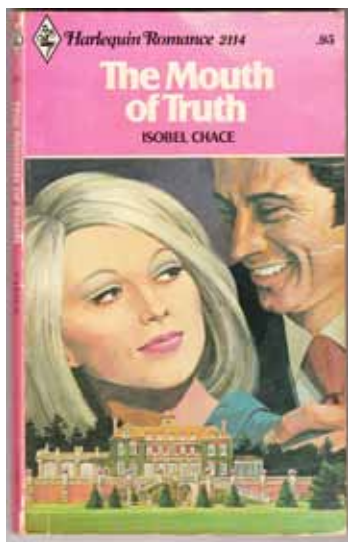
Old Westbury Gardens continues to be a popular venue for scenes in a number of television shows, including several programs on USA Network. Because of both the great size and the diversity of the locations provided by our grounds, it is entirely possible to film several episodes of the same program here, with each area giving the viewer the impression of an entirely distinct backdrop. An early episode of *Royal Pains* was filmed here in 2009 on



the West Porch and in front of Westbury House. Their crew returned earlier this year to shoot scenes for a totally different episode in the Palm house. In September, a separate USA crew filmed in Westbury House and in the swimming pool area for a pilot for a show called *Over Under*.



*Filming for Over Under near the swimming pool (far left) and in front of Westbury House (above), at left, Newsday reporter T. C. McCarthy interviews Royal Pains' star Mark Feuerstein about filming at the Gardens*



## Cover Story

Although the reproduction of images of the house and grounds for commercial purposes is tightly controlled, once in a while something odd pops up from the old days. The cover of this 1977 Harlequin Romance (overpriced at \$.95), includes an artist's rendering of the South View of Westbury House. There is no acknowledgement of Old Westbury Gardens (perhaps thankfully in this case). In fact, this whole thing is such a schlock job that it appears that the title was meant to be printed as *The Moment*, not *The Mouth, of Truth*. But apparently the book's editor didn't have the keen eye of our Public Programs Associate, Pio Ryan, who spotted this book on a recent trip to St. Louis.



When not helping visitors at Westbury House, Pio Ryan (at left, playing banjo), who is a versatile and skilled musician, tours the US and Europe with his band. He has also provided the entertainment during Volunteer Appreciation Parties and other Old Westbury Gardens functions, and taught traditional Celtic music during an Irish Culture Appreciation Day this summer.

## Behind the Fall Garden Wall

By Kim Johnson

The end of the growing year in the Walled Garden is in fact one of the high points of the entire season. It is the culmination of all the planning, planting, and continuous maintenance that results in this garden's climatic performance. The plants in the borders grow ever taller and lush, and take one last bow until next spring.

Many of the annuals planted since June are now tired looking and are replaced throughout the garden by a wide array of colorful varieties of Chrysanthemums (18 different types, in fact). Most of the Mums are at their peak flowering in late September and October. Other seasonal plants such as Pansies, Violas, Stock, and low growing Asters are also combined.

Most gardeners are aware of the large flowering Clematis that blooms on the walls early to midsummer. It is worth seeking out the other varieties that flower both earlier and later. *Paniculata* is a vigorous vine that over time can cover quite a bit of territory. Because it flowers later, it can benefit from an occasional shearing back during summer. A cloud of slightly sweet fragrant white flowers covers the area of the East Gate wall.

Some summer annuals have grown taller and actually perform their best towards the fall. An example of this is the large collection of Salvias. Four foot tall *Salvia Uliginosa* has been producing sky blue flowers since June. *Salvia Splendens* Van Houtteii 'Paul' produces large deep purple blooms. The newest noteworthy Salvia this year is *Salvia* 'Wendy's Wish.' Beautiful delicate magenta purple flowers are produced on three foot dark maroon nodding stems. *Salvia Leucantha* waits till the very end, sending out its graceful four foot branches of purple and white flowers at the end of October. The Dahlia bulbs

that were planted after the last threat of frost in June have now reached their impressive heights of five to seven feet.

Certain perennials are strategically placed in the borders scheduled to flower along with the annuals and Dahlias. New England Asters (*Aster Novae-Angliae*) both pink and blue varieties, reach four feet and provides a wonderful backdrop to all the borders. Another cousin to Asters is Boltonia, an attractive perennial with four foot grayish foliage and numerous small white daisies producing a white cloud when in flower. Many of the Roses in the Walled Garden are recurrent bloomers and send out another show towards the end of the season.



The star of the fall show is the Walled Garden's signature plant: *Tibouchina* Glory Bush or Princess Flower. Visitors are somewhat distraught to find out that this plant is not hardy in our area. It is overwintered in our greenhouses and planted out after it warms up sometime around the beginning of June. They start to produce flowers in the summer, yet peak blooming and intense purple flowers are more accentuated towards September and October. First frost on the petals and leaves are also a pretty sight. Glory Bushes are grown large and are planted in the back of the borders. They are complimentary companions with Dahlias, *Agastache* (Hyssop), *Cleome* (Spider Flower), *Verbena Bonariensis*, and Salvias.

When the century plus old Sugar Maple reigning over the garden north of the wall seemingly lights on fire with the leaves turning a bright orange, this usually signals the last week. History has shown that the first killing frost predictably occurs around Oct. 30. The curtain closes,

and now begins the work of planting 7000 bulbs to prepare for the next encore. Bravo.

*On previous page, Glory Bushes and Mums, at left, Dalias, Zinnias, and Salvia, at right, a Sugar Maple*

*Walled Garden images by Kim Johnson*



## Season's Passing

By Maura Brush

Last year at about this time, the horticulture staff was rejoicing that the gardens were finally getting some much-needed rain. This fall, we are wishing for a week *without* rainfall so the ground will dry out long enough for us to get into areas that have been saturated since before Hurricane Irene. Much of our damage from Irene was a direct result of the saturated soil levels that we have had since mid-August. Several trees were uprooted because the soil around them was so soft. Most gardeners understand the need to water during periods of drought. People often forget, however, that plants can often be harmed by too much water. In fact, the symptoms of a drought-stressed tree mirror those of a water-logged one.

Guests who visited the Rose Garden this summer would have encountered some interesting restoration work. The two circular beds on the east and west side of the Rose Garden had been infected with crown gall, a disease resulting from infection by a bacterium that causes galls to form at the base of the stem or root crown. The plants in these beds had been replaced a number of times. But

unfortunately, the bacteria remain in the soil. An effective and organic method of sanitizing the soil is solarization. Plastic is put over the beds so the soil temperatures rise, killing the bacteria.

Our rosarian, Ann Marie Zawistowski, also took the opportunity to do some restorative pruning and re-planting of the *Ilex crenata* 'Helleri' hedge that borders the parterres of the Rose Garden. Over the years, the hedge has been damaged by snow and ice or has just become overgrown in areas. Ann Marie has pruned or replaced these areas of the hedge. Next summer visitors will encounter lush hybrid tea roses in their new disease-free soil as well as a newly revitalized hedge.

As we move further into autumn, I am always a little sad that the growing season is coming to an end. The months that the gardens are closed can seem very dreary. But, plans and preparations are already underway for next year's plantings. Perennials are being potted, tulips are arriving, and seed selections are being made. And I will heed the advice of Henry David Thoreau: "Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influences of each."

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## **Kids Say the Darndest Things**

By Lisa Reichenberger

With the numbers of participants in the thousands, Old Westbury Gardens Environmental Education visits lend themselves to the excitement of uncovering nature's secrets. Yet in a world in which children's intellects seem more and more dependent on their classroom test scores, it is a relief to find that creative thoughts inspired by fresh air are still alive and well in growing brains.

As the fall season progresses, I ready my notepad for all of the delightful blurbs the rest of the school year will bring, and reflect back on those that already fill its pages. Here's a small sampling of what to expect when you're expecting thousands of children.

When discussing the entryway wall materials at Westbury House, one little respondent

proclaimed, "They're brown. Hmm... Must be chocolate!" When told of the age and history of the West Porch Beech Tree, Kindergartners are invited to study its parts including the seed pods. One child's deduction was, "It's a Beech Tree so they must be Beech balls." While noticing some birds on the South Lawn, one First Grader waved about a found feather inquiring, "Did anybody lose this? Does it belong to anyone out there?"

It is tricky to impart the exact reality of science to youths when their imaginations long to run wild. The good news is that the field allows for the mingling of fact and fiction in the form of discovery. There is always something new to unearth at Old Westbury Gardens and I eagerly anticipate the curiosities ahead as well as the chuckles that accompany them. You didn't hear it from me but, yes Virginia, those walls are made of chocolate!

## **Old Westbury Gardens News, Vol. 34, No. 2**

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