



Metro Hort Group History Milestones

1986 – 1987

Meeting informally over drinks, young professionals in New York City horticulture recognized a need for a network of professionals in urban horticulture, and the Metro Hort Group was born. The three co-founders were Gretchen Ferenz, Larry Lee, and David Murbach.

Informal garden visits and get-togethers took place with conversations focusing on creating more networking opportunities among this enthusiastic and energetic group. The early participants in this process included Gretchen Ferenz, Lucy Jones, Susan Lacerte, Charley Mazza, Lisa Miller and others.

Landmark Dates: The Early Years

1987

- July 8:* First meeting of “charter members.” Planning Board established with Gretchen Ferenz, Robin Hurst, Lucy Jones, Robert Martin, Bruce McInnes, Dave Murbach, Mary Riley Smith, Anne Trimble & Edwina von Gal.
- July 27:* First meeting of Planning Board
- September 29:* First “open invitational membership” meeting held at Tavern on the Green, hosted by Anne Trimble, the Tavern’s director of horticulture. Approximately 40 guests attend, most learning of it by word-of-mouth.
- October 15:* First Field Trip goes to Brooklyn Botanic Garden, hosted by charter member, Lucy Jones, BBG vice president for Education.
- November 17:* First general membership meeting, hosted by Gretchen Ferenz, commercial horticulture specialist, Cornell University Cooperative Extension, NYC. Open nominations for first Board of Directors (Gretchen Ferenz, Dave Murbach, Lucy Jones, Anne Trimble, Edwina von Gal, Barbara Britton, Robert Martin, Ron Casey, Richard Schnall, Mary Riley Smith, Bruce McInnes.
- December 9:* Second Field Trip goes to Rockefeller Center for Skating Party, hosted by Dave Murbach, manager of gardens division, Rockefeller Center.

1988

- Spring:* Metro Hort Incorporates as a 501 (c) (3). Andy Manshel facilitates “making it official” and the new organization creates a set of bylaws for governance.
- May 25, 1988:* David Murbach signs the Certificate of Incorporation.
- February & May:* General meetings held at Cornell University, Cooperative Extension, New York City.

Landmark Dates: The Early Years

(continued)

- 1989**
- General meetings held at McGraw-Hill building, midtown. When “rent” rose, meetings were moved to the Horticultural Society of New York space, then on West 58th Street.
 - Metro Hort logo of an Ailanthus leaf created by Dr. Stephen Tim of Brooklyn Botanic Garden.
 - Bulletin board display at general meeting encouraged members to post jobs, professional development opportunities, events, resumes, all items of interest.
 - Initiated the first Metro Hort Group Membership Directory, distributed to each member and updated annually; approximately 75 members at this time.
 - Developed a Jobs Hotline administered by phone recorded messages, matching employers with members seeking employment.
 - During the spring Drought Emergency, Metro Hort initiated a review of New York City’s Water Use Regulations pertaining to horticulture. Thus began a 2-year joint task force with the city’s Department of Environmental Protection to improve regulations in order to save water and sustain the city’s investment in its green infrastructure. The revised regulations were formally adopted by the City in July 1991.
 - Awarded Honorary Life Membership to Gretchen Ferenz, co-founder and administrator.
- 1990**
- Membership grows to 175+
 - As founder and leader, David Murbach receives Honorary Life Membership
- 1994**
- Membership grows to 300+
- 2000**
- Membership grows to 600+
- 2010**
- Membership grows to 700+

Board Leadership Through the Years

Metro Hort Group could not exist without the dedicated volunteer service of its board of directors and committee chairs. We are in the process of compiling the history of the board’s leadership, and will make that available as an addendum to this record.

2 Decades of Extraordinary Guest Speakers at General Meetings

- 1989 Carl Totemeier, Jr.
- 1990 Ken Druse, Hans Helmprecht, Alfred Rattie & Dominic Testa
- 1991 Linda Yang, Mary Riley Smith & Edwina von Gal, Ruth Rogers Clausen
- 1992 Michael Balick, Patti Hagen, Anne Raver & Margaret Roach, John Danzer, Michael Graham
- 1993 John Mickel, Judy Zuk, Richard Schnall & Dave Barnett, Tom Christopher, Nina Bassuk
- 1994 Pierre Bennerup, Nancy Chambers, Ken Druse & Margaret Roach, Brent Heath, Marco Stufano leading a member's forum, Terry Keller
- 1995 Bob Hyland, Mike Ruggiero, Barry Ferguson, Kim Mulcahy, Charles Price & Glenn Withey at BBG, Ruth Rogers Clausen
- 1996 Dan Hinkley, Cornelia Hahn Oberlande, landscape architect, Ken Druse, Kim Tripp at BBG, Fergus Garrett on Great Dixter, Chris Woods on Chanticleer, Caroline DeWilde
- 1997 Mobe Weinstein, Stephen Scaniello, Rob Proctor, David Culp, Noel Kingsbury, Peter Del Tredici, Simon Johnson on British gardens
- 1998 Dr. Richard Lighty on symbolic naturalistic gardening, Penelope Hobhouse, Mike Ruggiero, Holly Shimizu, Anya Malbach, Darrel Apps, Sarah Price
- 1999 Nina Bassuk, Rick Darke, Richard Iversen, Stephen Morrell, John Mickel, Caroline Burgess, Micharel O'Connor & James Johnson
- 2000 Dennis Schrader, John Danzer, Angela Tredwell, David Wheeler & Simon Dorall, Cheryl Garing, Ruth Rogers Clausen, Marco Stufano
- 2001 Paul Myer, Peggy Cornett, Francesca Ferrini, Pam Duthie, Fred Spicer, Tom Buchter, Hank Schannen
- 2002 Bill Noble, Nina Bassuk, Susanne Lucas, Pat Cullina, David Murbach, Bob Hyland
- 2003 Scott Canning, Claire Sawyers, Peter Kapik, Peter Del Tredici, Stephen Kristoph, T. Fleisher
- 2004 Judith Chatfield, Darrell Probst, Scott Kunst, Mike Ruggiero, Susan Lacerte, Ellen Hornig, Tamsin Yeh
- 2005 Robert Herman, William Logan, Harry Jans, Joe Disponzio, Steven Handel, Starr Ockange
- 2006 Adam Schwerner, Julie Moir Messervy, Christine Cook, Darrell Morrison, Darrell Trout, Doug Tallamy, John Mickel
- 2007 James Sotillo, Seiko Goto, Neil Ross, Chris Roddick, Uli Lorimer, Richard Jaynes, Dennis Schrader
- 2008 Jeff Mendoza, Vincent Simeone, Peter Del Tredici, T. Fleisher, Tavis Dockwiler, Dan Benarcik, Katy Moss Warner
- 2009 Wayne Cahilly, Todd Forrest, Andrew Bunting, Marge Doughtrey, Larry Weaner, Richard Hartlage, Jan Moyer, Deirdre Larkin
- 2010 Matt Urbanski, Steve Castorani, Dr. Richard Lighty, Kari Elwell Katzander, John Gwynne, Ellen Hornig, Suzanne Wainwright-Evans
- Dec.*
2010 The annual Holiday meeting brings Barbara Britton, Bruce McGinnes, and Gretchen Ferez to present remembrances of the early years and reminiscences of Lisa Miller, longtime MHG vice president, and David Murbach, "anonymous" founder.

20 Years of Terrific Field Trips

- 1989** Riverbank State Park, Stonecrop Gardens, Boscobel
- 1990** Central Park Zoo with Lynden Miller
- 1991** Montgomery Place with Tim Steinhoff
- 1992** Greenwood Cemetery, Riverbank State Park, BBG Rose Garden, Bryant Park with Lynden Miller
- 1993** Data missing
- 1994** Cloisters at Christmas with Susan Moody, Ken Druse's home garden in Brooklyn, BBG, Gardens of the Cooper-Hewett, Project Greenworks on Rikers Island
- June 1995** Special Dinner at Wave Hill, thanks to Kate French
- 1996** Wave Hill, Central park Harlem Meer, Matterhorn Nursery, BBG woody plants tour, Enid A. Haupt Conservatory at NYBG, Brooklyn community gardens
- 1997** Innisfree/Stonecrop, Twombly's, Chanticleer
- 1998** Evening at Wave Hill with Margaret Roach
- 1999** Mt. Cuba Center & private garden of Dr. Richard Lighty & William Frederick's garden Ashland Hollow, NYBG Rock Garden
- 2000** Data missing
- 2001** Kykuit, the Rockefeller estate gardens
- 2002** Rare Finds Nursery and Grounds for Sculpture, Rockefeller Center Channel Gardens with David Murbach
- 2003** Data missing
- 2004** Queens Botanical Garden with Susan Lacerte
- 2005** NYBG tours of conifers and the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, Central Park Conservatory Gardens
- 2006** BBG for Cherry Blossoms, Greenwood Gardens, NJ, and the James Rose Center (house and garden)
- 2007** BBG Rose Garden, Staten Island Chinese Scholar's Garden and Greenbelt Native Plant Center, Doyleston, PA, nursery tour, Martha Stewart's garden
- 2008** Pleasant Run Nursery and Grounds for Sculpture, two Nutley, NJ gardens with Richard Hartlage
- 2009** Cloisters and northern parks, Queens Botanic Garden Green Facility and Landscape
- 2010** Red Hook Brooklyn Nurseries, Eagle Street Urban Farm, New Herb Garden at BBG, Battery Park perennial plantings

Workshops for Professionals

Begun in 1993, workshops were taught “by professionals, for professionals.” Accommodating 30-40 people, in changing locations over the years, these workshop provided in-depth training on a variety of pertinent topics.

- 1993** Small Business Computer Needs, Rooftop Gardening, Aftercare Landscape Maintenance, Municipal Organic Gardening
- 1994** Rooftop Garden Infrastructure, Garden Photography, Water Conservation, Soil Science for the Professional
- 1995** Creating Outdoor Gardens for all People, Rooftop Garden Infrastructure (back by popular demand), The New Glamour Plants, Water Conservation (very popular!)
- 1996** Perennial Maintenance I and II, Garden Photography (another winner), Gardening Computers and CAD, Licensing of Landscape Contractors, Rooftop Gardening Infrastructure (again)
- 1997** Groundcovers, Photography, Plant Favorites, Mixed Borders, Rooftop Gardens, Plant Diseases
- 1998** Data missing
- 1999** Rooftop Gardens, Container Plantings, Trees & Shrubs for New York City, Perennial Maintenance, Water
- 2000** Plant Health, Woody Plants, Perennials I & II
- 2001** Learn-O-Rama, a single day of workshops, is tried out as an alternative to the workshop series. Although scheduled for a second year, it doesn't take place, and disappears as a viable concept.
- 2007** Garden Restoration with Dean Cardasis, Compost Tea/Soils with T. Fleisher, Green Roof Design & Install with Kate Blakewell
- 2008** Photography (with Sarah Cedar Miller), Plant Health with Marge Daughtrey
- 2009** Pruning in Central Park with Richard Weir

1997: Plant-O-Rama Begins

Begun in 1997, Plant-O-Rama has evolved as a major horticultural trade show and symposium, a valuable benefit for all members. From its inception, it has been generously hosted by the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. It was an instant success, largely through the leadership efforts of Bob Hyland, and in the early years, Bill Shank, assisted then and now by dedicated Metro Hort Group members who work to make it possible each year.

2011 will be the 15th consecutive year at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden for this thriving Metro Hort Group event.

Plant-O-Rama Speakers

Each year's Plant-O-Rama has featured presentation by leaders in the horticulture world

1997	Tony Avent (Plant Delights Nursery); Ken Druse
1998	Dan Hinkley (Heronwood Nursery)
1999	Marco Polo Stufano
2000	Roy Klehm (Klehm's Nursery/Song Sparrow Nursery)
2001	Den Druse; Rand B. Lee
2002	Pamela Harper; Richard Hartlage
2003	William Cullina
2004	Lauren Springer (Ogden) & Scott Ogden
2005	Dan Heims (Terra Nova Nurseries)
2006	Rick Darke; Cole Burrell
2007	Dale Hendricks; Patrick Cullina
2008	Brent Heath (Brent & Becky's Bulbs)
2009	Dan Hinkley; Michael Dosmann
2010	Lynden Miller; Margaret Roach; Ed Snodgrass
2011	Tony Avent; Adam Wheeler, Bob Hyland

Plant-O-Rama Sponsors & Exhibitors

Plant-O-Rama is made possible by its sponsors and its exhibitors, many of whom have supported this event through the years. A comprehensive list of corporate sponsors and exhibitors is available online at metrohort.org or at info@metrohort.org