

As 2021 continues to unfold, our community is gradually returning to our pre-pandemic way of life. We are forever changed and are adapting to a new way of meeting and celebrating with each other. As our reopening evolves, we the Metro Hort Group (MHG) Board want to share a few updates and let you our members know what we have planned for the rest of the year.

## JANUARY – JUNE, 2021

### Plant-O-Rama (January 26, 2020)

Our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary Plant-O-Rama, our first VIRTUAL, was a resounding success with over 825 attendees participating throughout the day.



Six symposium speakers gave outstanding ½-hour talks each followed by lively 15-minute Q&A sessions moderated by our Board members. Keynote speakers included:

- Adrian Benepe, *Gardens and Parks in the Age of Climate Change and Pandemic: Challenges, Refuges, and Natural Solutions*
- Signe Nielsen, *Little Island: A Refuge in the Storm*
- Jennifer Jewell, *The Earth in Her Hands: Growing a More Resilient Future*
- Leah Penniman, *Black Land Matters: Ending Racism & Injustice in our Food System & Gardens*
- Midori Shintani, *Tokachi Millennium Forest: Gardening with Wild Nature*; and
- Margaret Roach, *New Ways to Garden: Changing Practices for Professionals & Home Gardeners*

The on-line Trade Show had 37 vendors representing wholesale and retail growers, nurseries, arborists, pottery merchants, and public gardens in their own virtual booths. We did not organize a separate Jobs Fair, but plan will revive it in 2022.

We received many accolades and testimonials for keeping Plant-O-Rama *live* during the pandemic. Here are just a few:

*An inspiring example of finding a new way to bring people together no matter, and with wonderful new outcomes.* Leslie Findlen, Senior VP for Institutional Development, BBG

*It was wonderful to be able to watch speakers and chat with ease. I especially like the fact that so many from around the world were able to attend virtually.* Becca (a participant)

We also learned a lot from your feedback to make the upcoming Plant-O-Rama even better! Finally, a huge thanks to Sandra Nam & Lucas Cioffi of [QigoChat](#) for their online hosting & technical support of POR 2021.

### Monthly Meetings:

These speakers delivered excellent talks earlier this year on Zoom:

- February 18 - Stephanie Lucas, *380,000 Bulbs & Counting: Planting on the Front Lines of New York City*
- March 18 - Robert Kourik, *The Real Roots Story*
- April 12 - Karen Washington, *Trading in My Metro Cards for Tractors*

These speakers' slide presentations, in addition to all past speaker presentations may be found on our [Archives webpages](#).

### Membership:

Our membership remained relatively strong in spite of the pandemic due to continued programming. As of June 15, 2021, MHG had 116 corporate members and 349 individual members, for a total of 465 members. Membership in Metro Hort is one of the best deals in our industry, so please renew and/or join now! We also accept donations.

### Field Trips:

We were finally able to schedule field trips this season, still following State and City Covid-19 safety protocols. In June, the following field trips took place:

Sunday, June 6 - we had the great opportunity to make an early morning visit to the newly opened Little Island Park at Pier 55. Our tour was led by Signe Nielsen, Principal of MNLA, the landscape architecture firm who designed the new park, and Orrin Sheehan, Head of Horticulture. Although a small park the topography and diversity of the planting are astonishing and provide a wide array of experiences. Thirty members were fortunate to attend this limited capacity field trip.



*Signe Nielsen, Principal, MNLA*

Saturday, June 12 – Two sights in NJ were visited:

- Pleasant Run Nursery (PRN) – PRN, a long-time member and supporter, is a 15-acre wholesale container nursery that provides new and garden-worthy plants throughout the northeast. Sales Manager Carl Hesselein guided us around the plant production operations for a very impressive tour.



*Carl Hesselein, Pleasant Run Nursery*



*Janis Napoli, Grounds for Sculpture*



- Grounds for Sculpture – Horticulturist Janis Napoli lead this remarkable tour and explained how they use plants in unconventional ways by incorporating sculptures not typically seen in the area. Former Metro Hort board member Brian Carey was instrumental in the design of many areas of the garden.

## **UPCOMING IN 2021**

### **Monthly Meetings:**

Watch your emails or our website for notices of upcoming Monthly Meetings starting in September.

### **Field Trips:**

The following trips are planned for the summer season:

- Wednesday, July 14, 6 pm - Swindler Cove Park in northern Manhattan to learn about their *Living Shoreline* wetland restoration project that was completed in 2020.
- August 17, 6 pm - Kingsbridge Heights Community Center in the Bronx to see community gardens and learn about horticultural therapy programs for the local community.
- September (TBD) - Madison Square Park to see the *Maya Lin: Ghost Forest* installation as well as an exhibition about *Plants of the Pine Barrens*.

### **Workshops:**

The following are being planned for this fall:

- October: *Young Street Tree Care: From Mulching to Formative Pruning*
- December: *Winter Woody Plants I.D.: A Walking Tour*
- *The Business of Horticulture*

Dates and details will be sent to all members once scheduled.

### **MHG Board Diversity Workshop:**

It is important to state that the Board strongly believes that diversity and inclusion and overall representation of persons of color among our Board members and our entire membership is of great importance. While we have worked towards increasing diversity, we want to assure everyone that we will continue to work to find ways that reflect the communities we serve. To that end, the entire MHG Board will be participating in a two-session diversity workshop in July.

### **26<sup>th</sup> Annual Plant-O-Rama (Save the Dates: January 24 and 25, 2022)**

The Plant-O-Rama Committee is planning now for a two-session event on January 24 and 25. Following the success of this past January, we will present two acclaimed speakers on Monday evening, January 24, 2022 in a virtual broadcast, followed by a “live, in-person” symposium, trade show, jobs fair and speaker sessions at Brooklyn Botanic Garden the following day on Tuesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>. Look for updates by end of summer.

On behalf of the entire Metro Hort Group Board, I want to wish everyone a very happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday, and a safe, restful and relaxing summer!

Respectfully yours,

*Charles M. Yurgalevitch*

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