
THE FAIRFIELD GARDEN CLUB



Issue #10

June 19, 2020

VIRTUAL SEEDS OF WISDOM: TIPS AND QUIPS

In Summer Time

[Paul Laurence Dunbar](#) - 1872-1906

When summer time has come, and all
The world is in the magic thrall
Of perfumed airs that lull each sense
To fits of drowsy indolence;
When skies are deepest blue above,
And flow'rs aflush,—then most I love
To start, while early dews are damp,
And wend my way in woodland tramp
Where forests rustle, tree on tree,
And sing their silent songs to me;
Where pathways meet and pathways part,—
To walk with Nature heart by heart,
Till wearied out at last I lie
Where some sweet stream steals singing by
A mossy bank; where violets vie
In color with the summer sky,—
Or take my rod and line and hook,
And wander to some darkling brook,
Where all day long the willows dream,
And idly droop to kiss the stream,
And there to loll from morn till night—

Unheeding nibble, run, or bite—
Just for the joy of being there
And drinking in the summer air,
The summer sounds, and summer sights,
That set a restless mind to rights
When grief and pain and raging doubt
Of men and creeds have worn it out;
The birds' song and the water's drone,
The humming bee's low monotone,
The murmur of the passing breeze,
And all the sounds akin to these,
That make a man in summer time
Feel only fit for rest and rhyme.
Joy springs all radiant in my breast;
Though pauper poor, than king more blest,
The tide beats in my soul so strong
That happiness breaks forth in song,
And rings aloud the welkin blue
With all the songs I ever knew.
O time of rapture! time of song!
How swiftly glide thy days along
Adown the current of the years,
Above the rocks of grief and tears!
'Tis wealth enough of joy for me
In summer time to simply be.



From Claire Van de Berghe :

Into the Garden

Historians have recorded the existence of the world's first gardens around 10,000 BC. Initially grown for practical reasons, the concept of a garden has consistently changed meaning over the centuries. Their functions as ideologies, statements and symbols are ripe for discussion. We're delving into an array of gardens this weekend and beyond, zooming in on nature, histories and the cultural significance of these beautiful spaces. We've weeded out suitable conversations for those with active, aspiring, or dormant, green thumbs.

News: we've just added conversations for the weekend, back by popular demand. Learn about [Venice's Doge's Palace](#) with Sara, explore the [Making of Mexico](#) with Ignacio or engage with Hilary as she discusses [the Day the Renaissance Died](#). Scroll down to see our schedule and recently added tours (up till Sunday 21st June).



Explore Tivoli's Villa d'Este, a garden "of a Hundred Fountains", near Rome. This interactive conversation will expose this extraordinary 16th century garden, examine the protagonists involved in its creation and discuss the political and social climate during the life of the "Cardinal of Ferrara". [Saturday June 20th, 3pm ET](#) with Liz.

Tivoli fan? Diane is discussing Hadrian's Villa, this [Saturday June 13th, 7pm ET](#).

See all current Conversations

Newly Added Conversations... scroll down for more (in blue)



Munich; an Art History Introduction, with Francesca June 19th @3pm



Mayan Culture: the Pyramid of Chichen Itza, with Luis, June 20th @7pm ET



Raphael and Rome's 500th Anniversary Exhibit, with Sara, June 21st @3pm ET

Some questions from the week...

In Ancient Rome what were physicians NOT allowed to do?

Do you see existentialism as more of a reaction to or extension of modernism?

If you had only a week to visit the Camino, where would you go?

Why was Trotsky forced into exile and killed? How did he fall out of power?

What is the symbolism of the bread in the Milkmaid?

We look forward to hearing more of your questions in upcoming conversations. You're keeping our experts on their toes. They love it.

NEW conversations added today...

Friday, June 19th

Budapest: an Introduction, with Gabor @11am ET

Cervantes and Spanish Gastronomy, with Tessy @1pm ET

Munich: an Art History Introduction, with Francesca @3pm ET

The Iced Cocktail: Happy Hour History, with Diana @5pm ET

Secrets of Kyoto Geishas, with Gavin @7pm ET

Saturday, June 20th

Leonardo da Vinci as a Musician, with Kate @11am ET

Lifestyles of the Venetian Rich and Famous, with Sara @11am

Hermitage Museum Impressionists, with Irina @1pm ET

Picasso in Barcelona, with Biel @1pm ET

Tivoli's Villa d'Este Gardens, with Liz @3pm ET

Royal Gardens of Paris, with Marie @3pm ET

Vol 3: Nazi Paris, Women under Occupation, with Nigel @5pm ET

Mayan Culture: Chichen Itza, with Luis @7pm ET

Sunday, June 21st

Father's Day

Post WW2 Stasi Germany, with John @11am ET

Harry Potter and the Magic of Edinburgh, with Jenny @11am ET

Winston Churchill: a Biography, with Don @1pm ET

Scotch Whisky, with Nikki @1pm ET

Raphael and Rome's 500th Anniversary Exhibit, with Sara @3pm ET

Ancient Athens and the Agora, with Helena @3pm ET

Climate, Pandemics and the Fall of the Roman Empire, with Sarah @5pm ET

Hamilton in New York, with Ben @7pm ET

From Darien Pollinator Pathway: Two things that are coming up:

- 1) The CT Audubon is working on a native plant sale that will be local to us to be held at their Smith-Richardson preserve replete with sample garden beds to give you an idea of how the plants will look. More to come on that soon.
- 2) The June Pollinator Pathway newsletter is in the works and will be distributed soon.

Happy gardening! Keep spreading the joy of native, organic gardening to all.

From Nan Nelson: If you haven't seen Ogden and the riparian garden this year, it is time to stop by and take a peek! This week, Claire, Nan, Jenn, and Whitney completed some deadheading, cutting back, and shaping as well as moving a couple of plants. Weed-wacker master Jenn tackled the high grasses and growth near the riparian garden and the stonewall. After everyone's efforts we are looking much neater.

Our next work session is 6/29. We could really use some more help, and we would love to see some new faces! We are practicing safe distancing and wearing masks. Your efforts will leave you feeling rewarded. The beauty soothes the soul. Please consider joining in. Thank you, Claire, for the stunning photos. ☺



From Marlene Sheehan: I was so excited to show Carolyn Stubbs my front garden where she took these pictures. The garden is my design and my blood, sweat and tears!



From Susan Bonner: Barbara's information about the Georgia peaches coming to Gilberties in July inspired me to dig out a favorite recipe which includes peaches!

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups store-bought or homemade pesto, divided
1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons olive oil
1 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoons kosher salt, divided
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon pepper, divided
8 small bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (about 3 pounds)
4 ripe peaches, halved

1. Whisk 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups pesto, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup olive oil, 1 teaspoon salt and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon pepper until smooth. Add chicken to bowl and slide your hand between skin and meat to loosen skin. Rub half of pesto mixture under skin, then half over outside. Cover bowl and chill at least 1 hour or up to overnight.
2. Cook on grill or skillet over medium high heat. Season chicken with remaining salt and pepper. Grill skin side down 7-9 minutes. Turn and grill another 5 - 7 minutes.
3. Brush peach halves with oil. Grill peaches cut side down until warmed through, 2 - 3 minutes.
4. Whisk remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup pesto and 2 tablespoons oil in small bowl. Drizzle over peaches and chicken arranged on a platter.



From Olivia Charney: We served this at our Opening Luncheon a few years ago.

Katie's Southern Tomato Pie

7 Roma tomatoes. If using other kinds, remove seeds and drain well.

Salt and pepper to taste

2 minced garlic cloves

3 finely chopped basil leaves plus a couple more for garnish

Half or slightly less chopped purple onion

½ cup mayonnaise

1 cup shredded mild cheddar cheese

¼ cup goat cheese

Tobasco or desired hot sauce - optional

Pre-bake pie shell for 6-8 minutes at 375 degrees

Slice tomatoes and sprinkle with salt and pepper

Mix tomatoes, onion, garlic and basil

Place tomato mixture in the bottom of pie shell

Top with cheddar cheese

Sprinkle goat cheese on top

Place 2-3 large basil leaves in the middle for garnish

Bake assembled pie at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes



From **Laura Meyer**: The roses are amazing in Southport Village. Here are a few photos that don't begin to capture how beautiful they are. Of course the first picture is of Ellen Gould's spectacular flowers.



BEE THE CHANGE **Monday, June 22, 2020 - 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM**

Please join NRWA, Lachat Town Farm, Sustainable Weston and the Weston Garden Club as we celebrate Pollinator Week. What better way to start the week, than with an introduction to the Pollinator Pathway, presented by NRWA's Louise Washer.

The Pollinator Pathway project is entirely volunteer led and its goal is to establish safe and healthy habitat and food sources for bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other pollinating insects and wildlife along a series of continuous corridors. Most native bees have a range of about 750 meters, so the goal is to connect properties that are no farther apart than that. This project began in 2017 in Wilton, CT. Since then, pathways have been established in over 90 towns in CT, NY and most recently, PA... the list keeps growing.

Please join Louise Washer, co-founder of the Pollinator Pathway of New England, and president of the Norwalk River Watershed Association, as she presents the easy steps that all homeowners can take to create a safe haven for pollinators. Instructor: Louise Washer

Register in advance for this meeting: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEvduCurz4uHdFJcS22-8TIqkbbJAzlQ9sK>



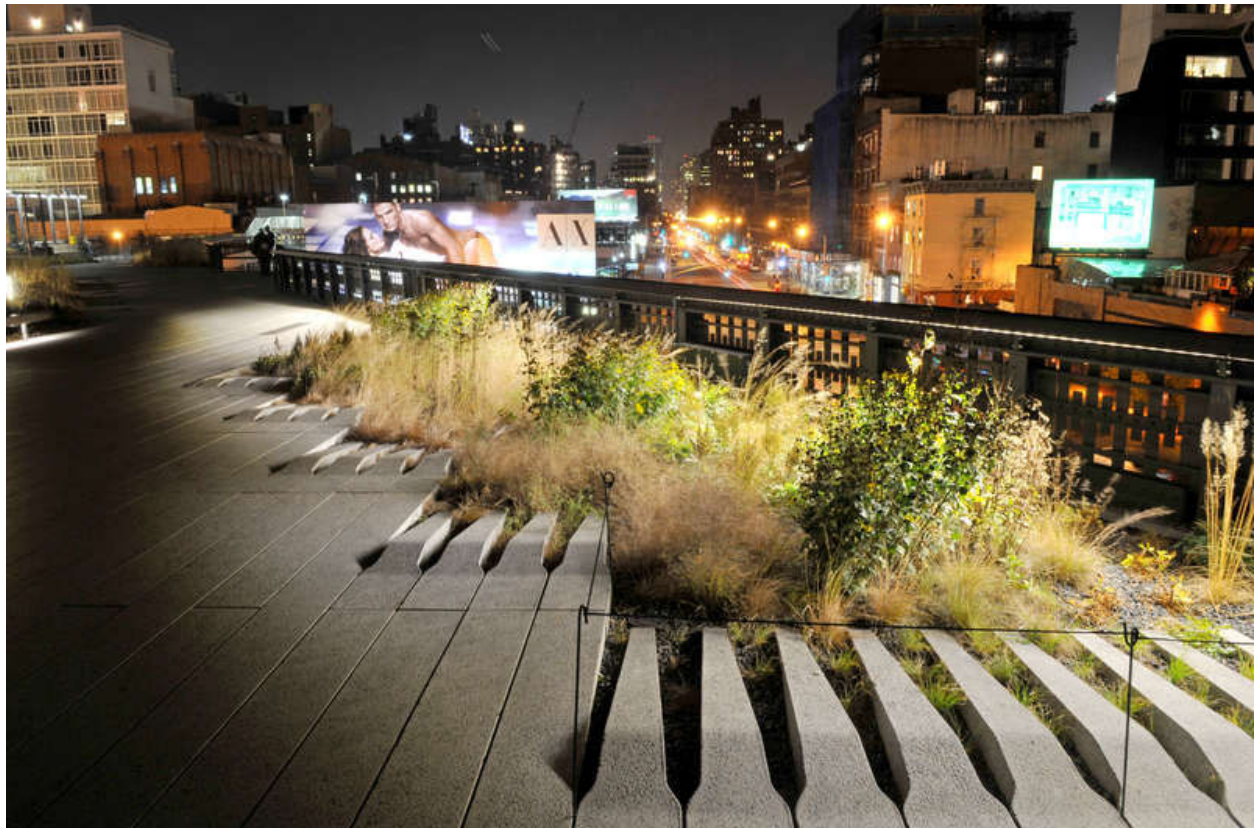
From Barbara Geddes Wooten: If you are missing the High Line in NYC, there is some good news. Due to a link from Jeanne Reed, many of us were able to see and preview the movie called Five Seasons: the Gardens of Piet Oudolf.

I contacted the writer and director, Thomas Piper, to see if we could have a “virtual screening” for our club.

They have given us a couple of options for which we would “pay” for a private link for a defined period of time.

The best scenes are showing his drawings on trace paper which have color sketches as overlays for each season. It is a dynamic viewpoint that gardens are different every season. I loved that as a designer.

If you are interested in us procuring a private showing, let me know.



A small seed of hope: The High Line's gardeners recently returned to the park to prepare for its eventual reopening. We'll keep you posted on our work with the City to develop operational protocols that will enable us to welcome you safely.

Since March 16, when our horticulture team began working remotely, over 100,000 Americans have died from COVID-19, and our nation has been rocked again by the racist violence that tears at our foundational beliefs in equity and justice. A garden alone cannot fix what is wrong, but the people who visit it, up-close and from afar, have the power to make lasting change.



We asked **Eric Rodriguez**, the High Line's Director of Horticulture, to tell us what his team is seeing in the gardens—which have been growing unchecked these last months—as they prepare to reopen the park.

“The horticulture team is excited to come back to the gardens. When people are living through terrible times, there’s comfort that comes from the idea of going back to something. I remember at the beginning of COVID, people were talking about ‘going back to normal.’ But there is no going back to normal. You’re not going to get back what you had in the past. That’s not a bad thing. There’s a danger in staying static, not evolving. If we’re looking backward, we’re looking in the wrong direction.”



“The gardens look great—there’s been 10 years of painstaking work to build their strength and resilience. At this point, some of the beds are at the height of their seasons, so we have to take a different approach than we would earlier in the spring. Can we cut back some areas? Would it look good? To do that now, you remove capacity for the plant to create food for itself. It’s almost like a medical approach: You have a patient and you’re assessing their condition. What is most important is to do no harm.”



“Many of the trees in the Gansevoort Woodland are serviceberries. Their fruit is ripening around now. This is one of the rare times in New York City when you see pigeons actually perching in trees. They sit on branches to eat the berries. We’ve created a unique place for them.”



“I’ve never seen the irises at the water feature this tall and lush. Usually we struggle with them, because people step on them, and just touching them with your toes can crush their growth. There’s lots of animal habitat here. We may get an increase in dragonflies and damselflies this summer.”



“The Northern Spur Preserve is one of our wilder gardens. It feels like the original High Line. The plants were selected to be aggressive, so they overgrow—you can see them reclaiming the tracks. We’ve been selectively editing so it’s not a blob and you can see the distinctions in textures and the different shapes, forms, and shades of green.”



“These are prairies. Wild prairies are typically managed through selective burning, but we can’t set these gardens on fire, so we make other interventions. We cut back seasonally to allow new growth to emerge. We do this in spring, leaving the old growth in place for the winter. That’s not just for aesthetics. New York birds use these plants as habitat and food source throughout the season.

Bees nest in some as well. When we cut them back during our annual Spring Cutback, it becomes a social engagement for our community volunteers.”



“This year we didn’t finish cutting back before we had to leave the park, which you can see in the Chelsea Grasslands. We’re interested in keeping the wildness. In the past we’ve been strategic about hiding all the seams in the garden, as if they were pristine and perfect. Now you’re seeing the seams, what these plants would do without human intervention. It might look more like the original, self-sown High Line than it has in the past.”



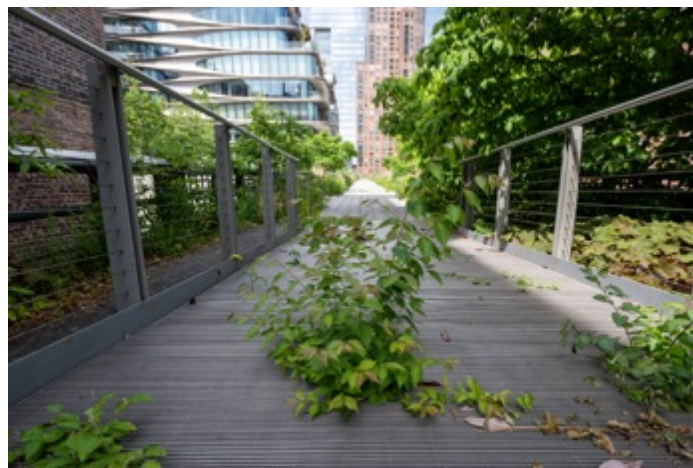
“A thicket is when the crowns of trees grow into each other. This garden, the Chelsea Thicket, is the closest you get to the deep woods on the High Line. You have to be strategic in your pruning here to create a vitrine, or a portrait; otherwise it would just be a mass of green. You want people to feel lost in the woods, but also to see the back of the beds.”



“The Chelsea Thicket is always particularly lush, but look at those greens! We had a really good spring for rain. We have an irrigation system, but nothing beats rainwater. It has more nutrients and minerals, and it’s not chlorinated. Rainwater really freshens plants. Think of a hot day in summer when you get a storm. Everything looks lusher, greener, and more vibrant afterwards. It has a calming effect on people, too.”



“The gardener for the lawn said this was his nightmare. Turf gardeners bring order to chaos. Many of them like crisp clean lines and diamond cuts. This is not that. This is chaos. But I like it. It looks more in keeping with the rest of the High Line aesthetic, softer and more fun to walk across and lay on. There are good things about a lawn reverting to seed. We’ll save money on lawn seed this year.”



“On the Flyover, plants are growing through the grating of the walkway, which you’d never see normally. They’re stretching and stretching to get that extra bit of light.”



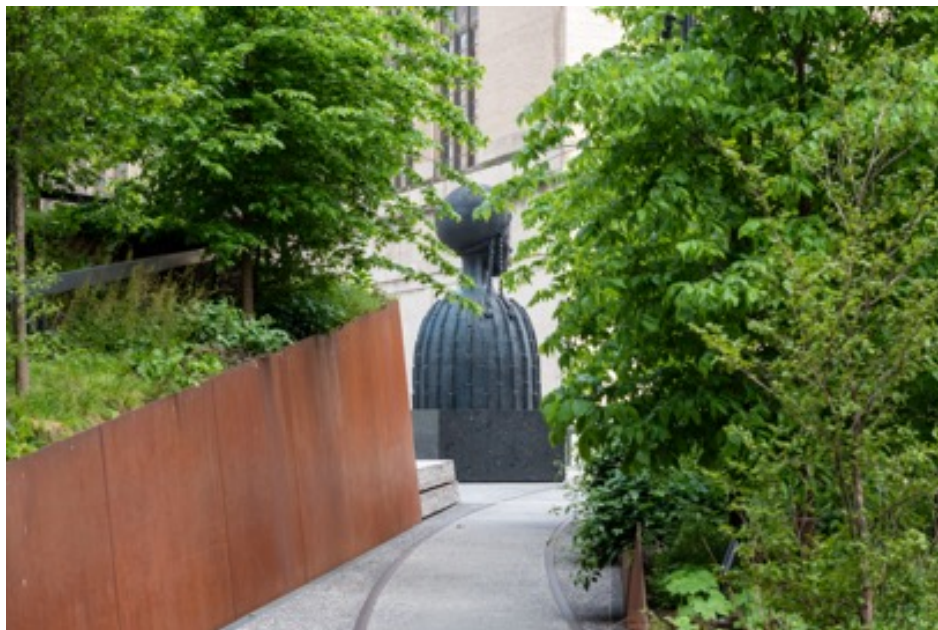
“The Flyover is where we can pull off one of the best horticultural tricks on the High Line, because it’s in a canyon of buildings. The magnolias are mostly from southern regions: North Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, northeastern Mexico, and the Caribbean. Because we have a unique urban condition here, protected from wind, we can introduce species that normally can’t grow in this region. It’s the art of the possible: 30 feet in the air, with eight inches of soil, you can create biodiversity by reacting to your limitations and treating them as opportunities.”



“June is the height of magnolia season on the High Line. The most asked question in June: What are those dinosaur flowers on those trees? They’re bigleaf magnolia—or *Magnolia macrophylla*.”



“The Alliums are coming up through tracks in Wildflower Field. The Wildflower Field is a late maturer, our slowest growing garden until July or August. It feels chronologically out-of-sync with the rest of the park until suddenly it's seven feet tall and alive with song birds, hummingbirds, and monarch butterflies. But it's a beast to maintain. You don't have an inch to walk in the beds.”



“This is the first spring for the Tilt planter after the opening of the Spur and Simone Leigh’s *Brick House* last year. It looks better than I thought it would. There is unique environmental exposure here. The Spur juts out, and wind accelerates. This is its first season—we had a truncated season last year when it was newly planted, so we are observing. What are we going to edit? What is going to self-select? The trees were installed with stakes, which is good practice for the first year. We probably would have removed them by now if we hadn’t needed to shelter-in-place, because trees become dependent on stakes. But it’s not critical. They are young trees and will adapt.”



“Friends have been talking to me about the loss of what we had before. I tell them, if you don’t like change, you’re really not going to like obsolescence. It’s easy to go back, but that is not our collective vision. If we only talk about maintaining planting designer Piet Oudolf’s original design and how to preserve it, that’s past tense. Even before COVID, we were looking strategically toward the future, to three years or five years from now, how to evolve and adapt. The gardens need to have a human intersection, a social intersection. Horticulture is one way of understanding what we intend when we make public space. You have to work through a set of value judgments, about what people care about and who those people are. That need—to be more forward thinking, to look to the years ahead—is even more appropriate now than we originally thought.”

From Barbara Geddes Wooten: This is a 1934 Post Road postcard of Fairfield. I just love these old images. Perhaps, I wish we were in a simpler time (and that time was surely not simple, but was in the depths of the depression). Guess today is the best of all possible days, just because we are all still here.

