

# Westchester Fairfield Horticultural Society

Founded 1910

An Educational and Community Service Organization

www.westfairhort.org

## West Fair Hort News

July 2008

### June Meeting

The West Fair Hort June 10th meeting at Sandra Hillman's garden, Stonybrooke, was a delight for all. We gathered on her covered side porch surrounded by a cottage garden of Queen Anne's Lace and daisies, enjoyed a light supper, and viewed the horticulture entries that members brought. Thanks to Sharon Reekstin for refreshments. Sandra told us that the house dates back to 1700 when John Mead constructed a mill for the stream on the steep slope, the remains of which can still be seen. The property has 3 houses - the main house, 2 houses up the hillside in back - and a tiny barn.

Sandra led us around the house where we saw grape vines from which she makes grape jelly. The back terrace was surrounded in roses, Graham Thomas, Abraham Darby, and New Dawn - and Clematis montana 'Rubra'. Cascading down the hillside atop a wall are peonies from the 1930's which she fertilizes with wood ashes from her many fireplaces. What was a garden of only orange daylilies has been transformed to a garden of blue and yellow: Basket of Gold, Russian sage, nepetas, Heliopsis, fragrant Hyperion lilies, and Hinoki cypress 'Cripsii' trees in a bed of pachysandra.

In the last few years, eight of her sugar maples have died. The last remaining one is still standing and covered in wisteria and a small double white Clematis 'Duchess of Edinburgh', and provides a home for many birds and animals.

In 1990 Sandra decided to go organic for her lawns and beds. The lawns struggled for two years but by the third year came in beautifully. She recommends using a lot of corn gluten.

As we walked down the steep hillside we looked back and saw the foxgloves and daisies marching down

the hill. Sandra had planted them at the top, and they have seeded themselves down the hill.

At the bottom of the property a series of ponds and waterfalls are enjoyed by all who drive on Taconic Road. She explained that the pond had been covered over, and she discovered it by scooping out the soil and re-setting the stones on the banks of it. One large stone found there is used as a bridge. Her love of wild roses shows, and she says they are the most fragrant thing in the garden.

At the end of the evening we saw her 15 hens, buff Orpingtons and black Australorps, in the chicken coop. Lastly, we went up to the tiny barn where we watched Sandra feed her three Babydoll sheep, who warmly greeted us, and her one Shetland pony. We were all transported back in time on this magical evening. An award-winning heritage iris, 'Helen McGregor', hybridized by Dr. Robert Graves, was given to Sam Bridge, Jr. for his garden.

We were glad to hear that this beautiful haven, having been granted historic status, is to be preserved forever.

### July Meeting

Next meeting: Sunday, July 13, 1-3 P.M., visit Lasdon Park and Arboretum with horticulturist Tolly Beck.

### Strickland Brook Park

Next maintenance morning at Strickland Brook Park: Saturday, July 19, from 10 A.M. to noon. Come and help maintain this lovely, WFHS-member-designed garden in front of the Cos Cob Library, 5 Sinaway Road, Cos Cob, CT. Contact Cora Burnham at 203-869-0011.

Westchester Fairfield Horticultural Society, Inc. [www.westfairhort.org](http://www.westfairhort.org)

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2008 Board Members: Cora Burnham, Strickland Brook Park Garden; DJ Haverkamp, Publicity; Eleanor Hoffman, Program & Editor; Kate Liba, President; Dinsa Mehta, Vice President; Serle Mosoff, Treasurer; Mary Jo Palmer, Horticulture; John Shalvoy, Hort Events; Sharon Shisler, Planning; Loretta Stagen, Conservation