

INNISWOOD IMAGE

A PUBLICATION OF THE INNISWOOD GARDEN SOCIETY

VOLUME 26 • ISSUE 2

President's Message by Annette Durbin, IGS President



*G*reetings garden buddies!

Thanks for putting down your garden books and seed catalogs for a moment to pick up this edition of the Inniswood newsletter and catch up on what we're up to. Not only do we have a percolating spring and plant planning to be excited about, but vaccines are being distributed. The light at the end of the pandemic tunnel is upon us.

We are thrilled that so many new people have been enjoying Inniswood since last spring as we continue to break visitation records every month. Bryan Knowles, his staff and volunteers are hard at work to keep the Gardens a sanctuary. Make sure to check out this year's virtual Spring Fling event! Enjoy the usual high caliber speakers, but from your favorite chair and on your own schedule! (However, if you want to be able to ask questions, be sure to tune in for the live event!).

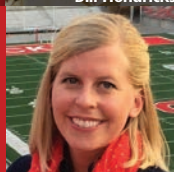
Hope you try something new in your garden this year. Maybe you'll try a new annual seed that will look lively and attract pollinators with your peppers and tomatoes. Or you'll finally pull out that overgrown perennial and replace it with a plant you have almost, but never did, put in your cart several times. We are so lucky to be gardeners!

We'll see you in the Gardens!

Join us virtually for our free educational program!



Bill Hendricks



Megan Fleischer

Virtual Spring Fling Monday, March 15, 7-9PM

The Inniswood Garden Society (IGS) Board of Trustees hosts:

Bill Hendricks, President, Klyn Nurseries, presenting:
"Small Trees/Shrubs for Low Light Areas - A Shady Proposition"

Megan Fleischer, Horticulturist, Inniswood Metro Gardens, presenting:
"Perennials for Shade"

FREE Event! Pre-registration required by Friday, March 12.
Must include name, phone and email. Register at 614-895-6216 or inniswoodgardensociety@gmail.com

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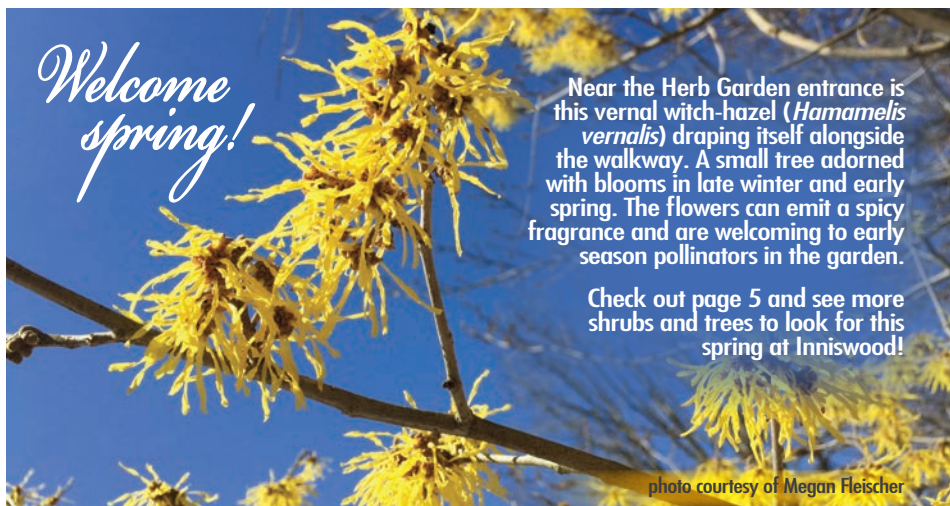
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www.inniswood.org

MARCH/APRIL/MAY 2021

Welcome spring!



Near the Herb Garden entrance is this vernal witch-hazel (*Hamamelis vernalis*) draping itself alongside the walkway. A small tree adorned with blooms in late winter and early spring. The flowers can emit a spicy fragrance and are welcoming to early season pollinators in the garden.

Check out page 5 and see more shrubs and trees to look for this spring at Inniswood!

photo courtesy of Megan Fleischer

It's membership renewal time! Renew at www.inniswood.org
It's simple and secure! Check out all the benefits!



The Making of a Garden Theme

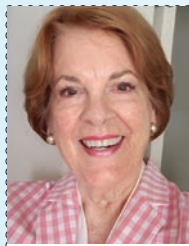
by **Megan Fleischer**, *Horticulturist*

*A*s I sit here typing, the sun is radiating through my office window giving me the warm feeling of spring's arrival. Although, as an Ohio native I certainly know better than to be tricked by these premature glimmers of spring; it's nice to dream. Once my eyes adjust to the bright light bursting through the glass, reality kicks in and the muted colors of the winter landscape quickly remind me that we are very much still in the thick of winter. This realization hits with a mix of disappointment and relief. Feelings of disappointment for obvious reasons, I think, but relief in that winter allows me the opportunity to slow down, sit at my desk and plan for the 2021 garden theme.

Inspiration for the yearly garden theme traditionally comes in all forms. Ideas from volunteers and staff, magazine articles, seed catalogs, social media influencers... But this year's theme inspiration came from an unlikely source: winter. The biting chill in the air, short days and long nights coupled with the shades of gray and brown and green cast across the winter landscape has had me yearning for one thing: color! Bright, bold and intense colors arranged in patterns like you'd view through a kaleidoscope. Ah, ha! A KALEIDOSCOPE OF COLOR, that's it, the garden theme for 2021! Feelings of excitement, rejuvenated energy and warmth rush over me as I plan these displays. Will these same feelings be shared by those viewing the gardens this summer? Hopefully!

My intention with this year's theme is that while visiting the Gardens you feel you're viewing them through a kaleidoscope; mosaic-like patterns and repetitious, bold colors sweeping through the beds. Look for layers of plant material accentuated by high-contrasting color pairings.

While I work through the beginning stages of planning, my excitement builds in anticipation of what's ahead for the Gardens. Goodbye winter doldrums, here comes the sun!



Welcome Jackie Lundberg to the IGS Board

by **Michele Thomas**, *IGS Board Member*

*J*ackie Lundberg has a passion for designing artistic flower arrangements. She is a member of the American Hosta and Hemerocallis Society and National Garden Clubs (NGC) Accredited Master Flower Show Judge. She was the featured speaker at the NGC Central Atlantic Region Convention and National Chrysanthemum Society. Jackie won the national Tri-Color Award from the Hemerocallis Society for an all-fresh design using daylilies. She has presented programs to garden club groups and conventions throughout the North Central United States. Jackie was also a past-president of the Creative Arrangers Guild. She is a long-time gardener and is a curious learner and lover of all things nature!

Jackie has been visiting Inniswood before it was Inniswood. She remembers going to a plant sale given by the Innis sisters that they had in their garage where she bought quite a few plants. For many years, she attended Creative Arrangers meetings and flower shows at Inniswood giving her the opportunity to see much of the development of the Gardens through the years.



late spring skunk cabbage, photo courtesy of Sarah Luckay

Moving Forward in 2021

by **Bryan Knowles**, *Public Gardens Manager*

The spring gardening season is upon us and things are hectic in the garden. I don't think many of us believed we would still be living in a pandemic a year later, but here we are. While we don't think 2021 will be "back to normal," at least in the spring, we do think it will be more like normal than 2020 was. After all, we know more about the disease now than we did a year ago.

Last March we had one employee a day working in the Gardens, and they weren't even gardeners. They opened and closed the gate, and kept things clean and sanitized. This spring, barring some unforeseen twist in this pandemic, that will not be the case. We may be on reduced staffing levels and altered schedules, but we will have all of our staff working, just maybe not all on the same days. We will also be able to have our volunteers back in the Gardens from the start, instead of halfway through the season.

Attendance Records

It's a good thing too. If trends are correct, this year will be busy. In 2020 we saw the second highest attendance ever, with just over 782,000 visitors. That is a 50% increase from 2019 and a 64% increase from the previous three-year average. Only in 2007 did we see higher attendance, which was the year of "Big Bugs." What we learned from the year of Big Bugs is that the new normal is going to be higher. The bar has been raised. Many new visitors found us and fell in love with us. We heard it over and over all year, even through December. In fact, December 2020 was a record month for December, with over 45,000 visitors. That represents a 93% increase from December 2019 and a 159% increase from the previous three-year December average. This was largely due to the success of Inniswood Illuminated.

Events and Programs

Educational programming is back in the Gardens too, but on a limited basis. We still need to adhere to the Governor's guidelines on group gathering size. Due to these gathering size restrictions, we are anticipating not having our bigger events in the spring, like the Annual Plant Sale and Children's Garden Day. Smaller program offerings will be sent out via email and require preregistration. If you are interested in getting on the email list, call our front desk at 614-895-6216. In addition, we will be increasing our virtual education efforts in the upcoming year, including educational how-to videos and self-guided walks in the Gardens using your phone.

Projects

We have numerous garden projects on tap for this year. Many are holdovers from 2020 that didn't get done due to operating in a pandemic. We will be refreshing some of the garden areas such as the Railroad Garden, adding plants to the Crevice Garden, and designing and installing a Rain Garden at the Greenhouse Multipurpose Center. These projects and others will be chronicled on our Facebook page ("like" our page if you haven't already), as well as future articles of the *Image*.

The theme this year should be bright, colorful and vibrant. I think we all can use some of that in our lives after last year. We hope to see you in the Gardens!



Stories in the Sisters' Garden

by **Jen Snyder**, *Environmental Educator*

Something new has sprouted up in the Sisters' Garden and it's not a plant. It is our new story trail! Take a stroll while enjoying a children's storybook. Numbered sign posts will help you find your way as you follow the book pages through the garden. The trail went up mid-January with Eve Bunting's "Red Fox Running," the story of a red fox searching for food for its family in a winter landscape. Wendell Minor's life-like paintings illustrate the book. Questions and information accompany the story pages to enrich the reader's experience. We plan to offer different books as the seasons change, so don't forget to check back often to see what new stories have sprouted up.

Inniswood Illuminated

by **Bryan Knowles**,
Public Gardens Manager

Once again Inniswood Illuminated was a success. Dare we go as far to say, a huge success. Building on 2019's display we placed lights in the Innis House beds, added more to complete the Rock Garden, and changed up the Rose Garden display. The most dramatic expansion was in the Sisters' Garden where we lit the front third including the bridge over the wetland, the row of ginkgo trees, and Granny's House. This year's display was enchanting.

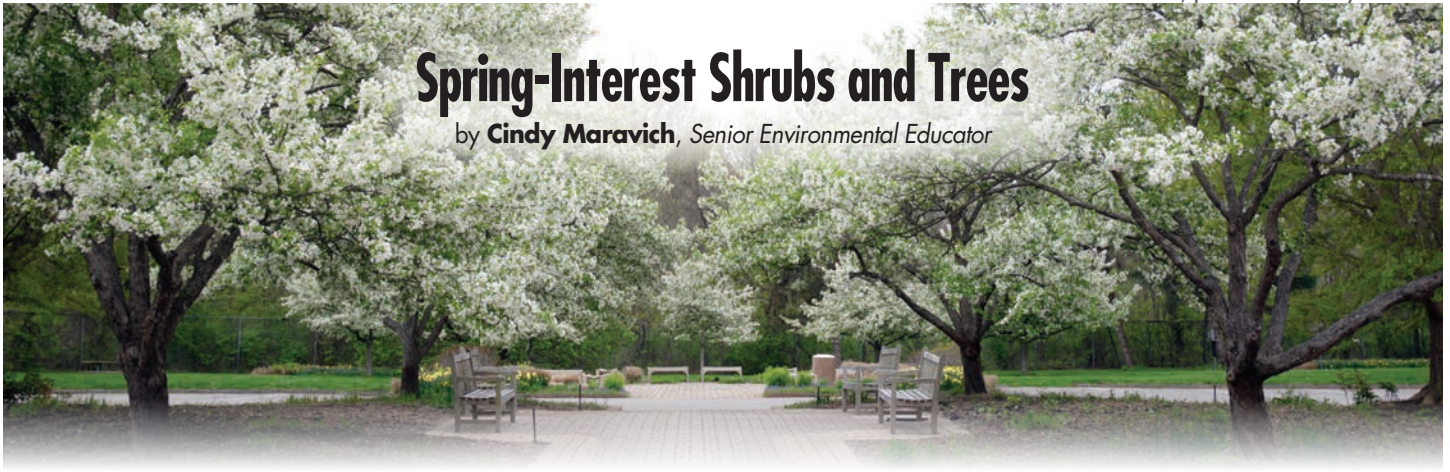
We had record attendance in the month of December, with over 45,000 people visiting Inniswood. Of those, over 18,000 people came to the Gardens after 5 p.m. (dark). As a comparison, in 2019 we had 4,500 people visit the gardens after 5 p.m. over a six week period. The 2020 Inniswood Illuminated was so successful in fact, Metro Parks headquarters asked us to keep the lights up through the end of January.

Staff is already coming up with ideas to grow the lighting display in 2021. We expect to continue the expansion into the rest of the Sisters' Garden and perhaps into the Conifer Garden.



Spring-Interest Shrubs and Trees

by **Cindy Maravich**, Senior Environmental Educator



Spring brings out optimism in gardeners and gardens. It's a time for new lives, new leaves, and new flowers! Many of our trees and shrubs have been waiting for longer days and warmer temperatures. Be on the lookout for these spring-interest plants at Inniswood:

A welcoming walk or drive through the parking lot isn't complete without ducking under or around a crabapple's lower branches. This group of small trees and shrubs are like candy-coated toppings of a garden cake. Their buds, blooms, leaves, and persistent fruit give landscapes some interest most of the year and add colorful and useful detail to the space. *Malus 'Snowdrift'* can be found near the center of the parking lot and is adorned with red buds in the spring that open to single white flowers found along nearly every branch.

Multi-stemmed serviceberry trees can be found throughout the Gardens. However, *Amelanchier x grandiflora* 'Autumn Brilliance' is one type of serviceberry that can be quite striking, particularly in spring. A hybrid cross between downy serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*) and Allegheny serviceberry (*Amelanchier laevis*), this serviceberry's specific epithet: *grandiflora*, means large flower. The white bloom gives way to fruit that birds benefit from and the foliage, which is where the cultivar name comes from, is a rusty, red, autumn color. The fruit on this tree is edible by wildlife and people. This tree can be found in the Memorial Garden and along the Fence Border, near the parking lot.

Along the trail near the Memorial Garden, just south of the Innis House, the fringe tree (*Chionanthus retusus*) begins to show its white fragrant, panicle flowers. The flowers have been said to resemble an old man's beard and that description has become another common name for the fringy-flowered fringe tree. This dioecious tree bears flowers on both male and female plants, however, the showier flower belongs to the male species.

Near one of the entrances to the Herb Garden, vernal witch-hazel (*Hamamelis vernalis*) drapes itself alongside the walkway. This small tree is adorned with spider leg-shaped yellow orange blooms in late winter and early spring. The flowers can emit a spicy fragrance and are welcoming to early season pollinators in the garden. The clustered growth habit of the tree, the interesting blooms, and the benefits to wildlife make this tree one to look for this spring.

Often times, smaller shrubs blend into the landscape quite easily once spring pushes out the leaves of surrounding plants and trees. One shrub that deserves a bit more attention is fothergilla (*Fothergilla x intermedia* 'Blue Shadow'). Found at the lower end of the Rock Garden, this shrub is in the same plant family as witch-hazel and they share the same wavy-margined leaves whose bases connect unevenly to the stem. Short, bottlebrush-shaped, white flowers pop through the gardens in mid-spring. This particular species of fothergilla graces the summer garden with blue-green colored leaves and is an excellent addition to a woodland garden.

Across from the Innis House and along many of the wooded trails, a popular, native shrub can be found. Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) packs a lot of positivity in a small understory shrub. In spring, these plants have many yellow flowers that are visited by many early flying native bees. The plant's stems and leaves emit a spicy fragrance when crushed giving it its common name. Not only is this shrub aesthetically pleasing, but it also serves good purposes in the ecosystem. It's the host plant for Spicebush and Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterflies and the Promethea silkworm. The red berries, seen July-October, are high in fat and are quickly gobbled up by migrating and resident birds. This is a useful and interesting shrub and deserves some attention this spring.

The Gardens are full of optimism this season. Make sure you get out to experience it.



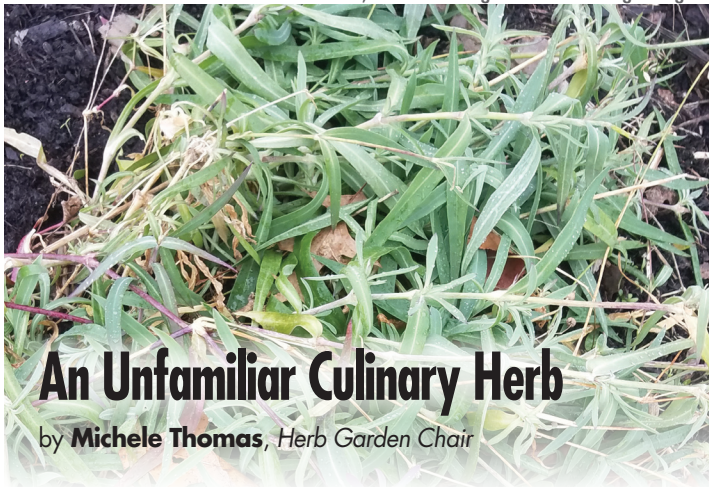
fringe tree (*Chionanthus retusus*)
photo courtesy of Bryan Knowles



fothergilla (*Fothergilla x intermedia* 'Blue Shadow')
photo courtesy of Bryan Knowles



spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)
photo courtesy of Megan Fleischer



An Unfamiliar Culinary Herb

by Michele Thomas, Herb Garden Chair

In 2020, one little-known Italian culinary herb was trialed in the Central Ohio Unit Herb Garden at Inniswood. Here are the results:

Sculpit/Stridolo (*Silene inflata*/*Silene vulgaris*)

Sculpit (English) stridolo (Italian), *Silene inflata* (botanical) was a fun, new discovery for me in 2020. I first learned of sculpit in an article by Erin Benzakein of Floret Farm about filler flowers for fresh bouquets. The delicate bladder-like, subtle pinkish-green flowers and smooth bluish-green leaves give a whimsical touch to bouquets. For all its delicate appearance, the flowers hold up well in arrangements, look good in the garden, plus attract bees. I found the seed through an Internet search and purchased it from Uprising Seeds. It was from their website that I learned sculpit or stridolo is a lesser-known culinary herb, even to Italians. It seems to have escaped total obscurity due to an April Stridolo Festival which takes place in the romantic village of Galeata, Italy in the Emilia-Romagna region. It grows wild in the surrounding dry woodlands and meadows. That's a hint as to sculpits preferred growing conditions.

Sculpit is easy to grow from seed planted directly in the soil after frost or by starting the seeds indoors. Transplant the seedlings outdoors after last frost, about mid-May. It prefers full sun and poorer soils. Being hardy only to zone 7 south, it will need to be replanted each year. I did not find any reference that said sculpit reseeds. If the sculpit is planted in rich soil, it may fail to bloom. Great if you only want to grow it for harvesting the edible leaves, but not if you want flowers. You'll need to water to establish the transplants, and fertilize once when planted. The sculpit was not attacked by munching or sucking insects, nor any fungal diseases. In the garden three sculpits were planted in front of basil 'Aromatto,' (a fragrant, tall, cut flower basil), which shaded the sculpit a bit from full sun. The soft green leaves of sculpit looked great against the dark purple leaves of the ornamental basil. The leaves are described as having the flavors of arugula, tarragon and chicory. If you are interested in cooking with it, rather than eating the sculpit leaves raw in a salad, here are a couple of recipes at Terroir Seeds <https://underwoodgardens.com>—Tagliatelle with stridoli (sculpit) and Risotto alla Veronese.

Digging a bit deeper into the background of this plant, I discovered that the Italian herb is most likely the commonly known *Silene vulgaris*, bladder campion, found around the world in temperate climates. Well, that killed the Italian romance of the herb. *Silene v.* was introduced from Europe to the United States and Canada. I found references that stated, "Previously sculpit was known as *Silene inflata*, however, it is now thought that *vulgaris* and *inflata* refer to the same species, though sculpit may be a larger domesticated form." (Tandem Croft Garden, Scotland). And another reference said *S. inflata* is the obsolete scientific name for *S. vulgaris*. Think I'll order *Silene vulgaris* seed and grow both to see if they are the same plant.



Fun to watch bees crawl in and out of the sculpit flowers!

Three Basil Trials

by Michele Thomas, Herb Garden Chair

Since 2017 I've been on the hunt for basil with good flavor and resistance to basil downy mildew. FYI, basil downy mildew (BDM) is not the same as the whitish-powder dusted appearance of powdery mildew. But both mildews are fungal diseases. Plants susceptible to fungal diseases need to be treated with a fungicide before the plant becomes infected. That means weekly spraying the plant for its entire season of growth. But there's no guarantee you will be successful in preventing the disease. UGH! Researchers suggest BDM may come from contaminated seed or carried by the wind. BDM will first appear as a nutritional deficiency; leaves show a slight yellowing. Next, the sporulation stage develops as many tiny purplish-gray spots coalesce on the underside of the leaves. From this point on, leaves start to drop off and the basil plants are ugly and inedible. Once you understand the cycle of BDM, at the first sign of yellowing, I suggest pulling the plants out of the ground or container, stripping off all the leaves and making lots of pesto. If the plant is still in the ground or container past the yellowing stage, pull the plant, pick up any fallen leaves, stuff the basil into a plastic bag and throw it in the trash. Don't compost! Cornell University has excellent pictures of BDM at each stage of the disease. <https://www.vegetables.cornell.edu/pest-management/disease-factsheets/basil-downy-mildew/#Symptoms>

Most years, BDM shows up in late July, early August. Higher humidity, rains, or cool nights / hot days, are a perfect set up for BDM to develop. In 2020, July and August were drought-like. No BDM. I thought, finally, the three downy mildew resistant basil trials escaped BDM! Unfortunately, the disease was only delayed. I was grateful to see rains return to relieve dry garden conditions, but BDM came with the September rains. I do believe the resistant varieties helped stave off the BDM better than non-resistant varieties like Genovese and Italian large-leaf (Napolitano). Despite Genovese and Italian large-leaf being the most susceptible to BDM, they are the most flavorful and my favorites.

[Three Basil Trials continued on page 7]

[Three Basil Trials continued from page 6]

In 2020, the following three BDM resistant basil varieties were trialed in the Central Ohio Unit Herb Garden.

Rutgers Devotion DMR

Grown side by side, it was difficult to see any difference between Devotion and Obsession. Both had thicker, slightly smaller, darker green leaves than Genovese. But the difference was notable when I tasted the two. Devotion had a very strong peppery, almost bitter flavor with little of the favored sweet anise flavor. It made me wonder if the breeders did a taste test before releasing it.

Rutgers Obsession DMR

Obsession had a much milder flavor than Devotion, but still not quite that distinctive Genovese flavor. Chiffonade for bruschetta or processed into pesto, Obsession works well. The smaller leaves are thicker than Genovese which improves its ability to resist BDM. Devotion and Obsession are more resistant to BDM than the classic Genovese or Italian Large-leaf (Napolitano), but lack the mouth-watering aroma and smooth flavor of Genovese.

Everleaf Emerald Towers

This basil is touted as a disease resistant, late flowering, columnar, Genovese-flavored growing machine. Coming in at 24-33 inches tall and 8-12 inches wide, it lives up to the name Everleaf Emerald Towers (EET). My favorite basil, Genovese, seems to be the most susceptible to BDM. Emerald Towers is not. Throughout the growing season, you will be harvesting an abundance of great tasting basil leaves. You know how it is with basil as they mature. You're furiously trimming the tops off the plants to keep them from flowering so they don't develop that strong, astringent flavor. EET flowers 10-12 weeks later than most basil. High five to James Irvine who bred Everleaf Emerald Towers for Pan American seed. Of the three trialed basil, Everleaf Emerald Tower is definitely the winner.



BDM damaged leaves
photo courtesy sites.udel.edu



Rutgers Obsession Basil DMR
photo courtesy rutgers.edu



The winner! Everleaf Emerald Towers
photo courtesy greenhousecanada.com

Continuing the Inniswood Legacy

by **Nancy Kaler**, Secretary

Just about 60 years ago Grace and Mary Innis purchased 37 acres of land in Westerville, built a home, and eventually donated the property and house to Metro Parks. The rest, as they say, is history.

Lately I have been thinking about the expression "saving grace." According to one definition a saving grace is "something positive in an otherwise bad situation." Certainly, in 2020 as we all tried to navigate our way through COVID-19, Inniswood has been a saving grace:

- for those suffering from cabin fever and needing a safe place to walk;
- for those who wanted a quiet place to contemplate and hear nature's whispered assurances that life will return to normal;
- for circles of friends who met under the protective canopy of our shade trees;
- for nearly a hundred couples whose wedding plans were dashed to smithereens by various closures;
- for those who, in December, needed holiday cheer or a silent night.

I wish that I had kept track of the number of phone calls we received asking how much it cost to get into the park. The reaction was often one of surprise and relief when callers found out that the park was free— another saving grace during the recent economic uncertainty. Of course, Inniswood would not be here without unstinting and ongoing public support. But there is another truth— over the decades hundreds of exceptional staff, dedicated volunteers, **IGS members (that means YOU)**, and generous donors sowed the seeds of these gardens of joy and respite.

Through the lens of the pandemic, the importance of all our parks has zoomed into focus; one can only hope that this vision does not become blurred as the nation returns to health.

With 2020 hindsight, I would encourage you to pause a moment and give thanks to Grace and Mary Innis who left the community a space to enjoy in sickness and health and then pat yourself on the back for choosing to make a difference...all truly saving graces.

You should have received a membership renewal notification by now. If you are able, please consider renewing your IGS membership for 2021, invite a friend, and continue to make a difference.



INNISWOOD GARDEN SOCIETY
940 SOUTH HEMPSTEAD ROAD
WESTERVILLE, OHIO 43081

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Columbus, Ohio



Newest Members to the Inniswood Garden Society

Timothy Doyle Erin Gillogly Virginia Marie Goetz-Wagner Kelsey Hines

Kroger Community Rewards Program

This quarter's Kroger Rewards paid IGS \$65.81
Start participation at: www.kroger.com/communityrewards

Gifts to the Rock / Crevice Garden

Susan Whitaker/Malloure Family Foundation

Gifts to the Garden Development Fund

Angela Burdge Susan Keyser George Koval Kathleen Moss
Carl & Carol Boehm in honor of their friend Connie Emerson

Your gifts, payable to the Inniswood Garden Society, are very much appreciated. They are added to the Garden Development Fund unless otherwise noted. Please include the name(s) of the person(s) being remembered or honored, and show your name exactly as you wish it to appear in the IMAGE.

Also, the Society has established the Inniswood Garden Society Fund at the Columbus Foundation should you wish to make a gift as part of your annual charitable giving or your estate planning. For further information, please contact IGS at 614-895-6216 or the Columbus Foundation.

INNISWOOD GARDEN SOCIETY BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2021

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Ex-Officio Member: **Bryan Knowles - Public Gardens Manager**

INNISWOOD METRO GARDENS STAFF

Public Gardens Manager: **Bryan Knowles**
Horticulturist: **Megan Fleischer**
Sr. Environmental Educator: **Cindy Maravich**
Environmental Educator: **Jen Snyder**
Volunteer Coordinator: **Terri Bassett-Smith**
Grounds Staff: **Jane Collins, Sarah Defourney, Chris Johnson, Joe Smelker**

Inniswood Metro Gardens is a facility of Franklin County Metro Parks, located at 940 South Hempstead Road, Westerville, Ohio.

Inniswood is open daily from 7:00 a.m. until dark.
The Innis House is open Tuesday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Closed on Mondays and holidays.

For information, phone (614) 895-6216.

Visit us often! www.inniswood.org

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To assure delivery, please send change of address information to:
Inniswood Garden Society Membership
940 South Hempstead Road
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