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Garden for the Greater Good



Matt Rader

You are the heart of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS). Together with hundreds of thousands of like-minded enthusiasts, you invest your time, money, and passion in PHS's efforts to use horticulture to unlock the "greater good" – the health and well-being of everyone. At PHS, we believe that gardening offers each of us the power to impact lives and communities for the better – and we want to help you unlock that power for yourself.

All of us at PHS – staff and volunteers – look forward to the Philadelphia Flower Show every year. We love to share the beauty and power of horticulture with over 250,000 people. We love to say goodbye to the drear of winter with the sights, sounds, and scents of spring. We also love to put Philadelphia – America's Garden Capital – on horticulture's center stage for the nine days of the world's oldest and largest indoor flower show.

The Philadelphia Flower Show is just a part of what we do at PHS. PHS's goal is to use horticulture to advance the region's health and well-being. As the weather begins to warm, you will find PHS volunteers at work on community projects in more than 250 neighborhoods; home gardeners inspired by PHS starting their Spring plantings; and PHS's horticulturists and volunteers at work in our public gardens and landscapes. Together, this work uses horticulture to advance our four impact priorities:

creating healthy living environments, increasing access to fresh food, expanding economic opportunity, and building meaningful social connections.

The time, money, and passion you contribute through the year help us advance these impact priorities by: planting more trees; supporting community gardens; cleaning and greening vacant lots; training people to start horticulture careers; getting students involved in horticulture; and expanding horticulture's reach. Just by purchasing a ticket to the Flower Show, you are part of a larger force helping us achieve our vision of advancing the health and well-being of the Greater Philadelphia region. I encourage you to take that commitment one step further by becoming a PHS member or volunteering with us today.

According to the National Gardening Survey, 77% of American households participate in gardening – and that number is growing.

How could we change the world if everyone used horticulture not only as a source of personal joy, but as a tool to positively impact other people and communities?

I invite you to think about horticulture and PHS in a different way. Together, we can plant with purpose. We can grow healthier communities. Join all of us at PHS today in "Gardening for the Greater Good."

Matt Rader, PHS President

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Show Hours

Members' Preview

Friday, February 28: 12:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Saturday, February 29: 8:00 am – 11:00 am

General Hours

Saturday, February 29: 11:00 am – 8:00 pm

Sunday, March 1: 8:00 am – 9:00 pm

Monday – Friday, March 2 – 6: 10:00 am – 9:00 pm

Saturday, March 7: 8:00 am – 9:00 pm

Sunday, March 8: 8:00 am – 6:00 pm

*Last entry each day is 30 minutes prior to close.



 PHS philadelphia flower show

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Preview Party proceeds support essential PHS services that improve the health and well-being of people throughout the Greater Philadelphia region.

Take a *Riviera Holiday* this winter



By Rachel Ravina
rravina@21st-centurymedia.com

Thoughts of the breathtaking beaches of the Mediterranean and a mid-winter vacation to the Riviera sound warm and inviting this time of year.

For those who can't indulge in that luxury, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) will take you there this February without having to get on a plane: The 2020 PHS Philadelphia Flower Show "Riviera Holiday" will transport visitors to the Mediterranean region from Feb. 29th to March 8th at the Pennsylvania Convention Center.

This year's theme is a perfect antidote to winter and a wonderful opportunity for exhibitors and visitors alike, says PHS, the organization in charge of putting on its 191st Flower Show, the longest running and largest indoor Flower Show in the world.

Organizers say they want the atmosphere to be as authentic as possible for the hundreds of thousands of Show visitors inside the convention center.

Sam Lemheney, PHS Chief of

Shows and Events, always stresses the importance of authenticity.

For this year's theme, Lemheney and several colleagues visited the south of France, Italy, and Spain to gain inspiration during the early planning stages of the event.

"We have a tough job," Lemheney said with a laugh.

"It's crucial to get everything right – from the exhibit criteria to the overall ambiance," he explained.

PHS and its thousands of volunteers work hard "to be sure what we're going to be delivering at the Flower Show is authentic, and make sure it feels right, and make sure it addresses the theme," he said. "We want visitors to feel the culture; we want to bring that to life."

Lemheney said the organization chose other locations as themes in the event's past including Hawaii and Ireland, and those "getaways" have drawn rave reviews from show visitors.

"The folks that come to the Flower Show really want to be taken away to a fun spot around the world and want to be transported to an amazing

unique location," he said.

What's in a theme?

The Mediterranean region is incorporated into the Show in a number of ways to carry out the "Riviera Holiday" theme. Upon entering, visitors will be immersed in the Mediterranean region with an array of colors, scents of lemon trees and lavender, along with the textures and designs of a typical Mediterranean garden.

"The theme starts at the entrance garden with an abundance of flowers," Lemheney said.

"You'll walk underneath this beautiful arbor that's completely covered in flowers with a color scheme of pink, orange, and a combination of blue and purple hues."

Visitors' senses will come alive as they walk past olive trees, lemon trees, Italian Cypress, cacti, succulents, and other native plants displayed in the exhibits.

Princess Grace's ties to Philadelphia

Lemheney said this year's theme also pays tribute to Monaco and Her Royal Highness Princess Grace, a Philadelphia native who married Prince Rainier III of Monaco in 1956 to join the royal family on the Riviera.

Princess Grace's love for flowers, especially roses, were apparent in many of her hobbies. She is well known for her pressed flower displays and co-authored a book called "My Book of Flowers" with journalist Gwen Robyns in 1980. In 1976, the year of America's bicentennial, Princess Grace served as a judge at the Philadelphia Flower Show.

Lemheney said that Monaco's government, through the Embassy of the Principality of Monaco, worked with PHS to replicate Princess Grace's

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Rose Garden in Monaco for the Show. The central piece of the display will be a replica of her wedding dress that she wore in 1956.

Beyond flowers

The Mediterranean theme also extends to events surrounding the Flower Show.

Rebecca Schuchart, Director of Events for PHS, is the lead organizer of the Bloomin' Brunch, a new event this year which takes visitors on a Riviera holiday with a culinary experience that incorporates the theme.

The three-course meal will include an imported bread display with a light spring salad, a spring quiche, and farm-to-table miniature cupcakes. A vegan option is available upon request.

The Bloomin' Brunch will take place daily from Sunday, March 1 until March 8 in room 201C on the concourse of the Pennsylvania Convention Center. There are two seatings available: 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. The Sunday, March 8 seating will only have an 11 a.m. option.

Tickets for the brunch are \$35 in advance, and \$45 onsite.

To buy a Flower Show ticket or make a reservation for the Bloomin' Brunch, visit theflowershow.com.

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Digging in to volunteer opportunities

By Rachel Ravina
rravina@21st-centurymedia.com

Gardeners are known for getting their hands dirty and, at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, that means volunteering.

PHS hosts a variety of volunteer opportunities at the Philadelphia Flower Show and throughout the year, ranging from tasks for those who want to stay clean to tasks for those who don't mind dirt, gardening gloves and some tools.

Betty Greene, Associate Director of Competitive Classes and Volunteers, said that the organization needs approximately 2,000 volunteers for the annual Flower Show.

"We need a lot of help behind the scenes before the Show opens and also when the Show is open to the public," she said.

Mary Ellen Dugan has been a volunteer at the Show for the past 10 years.

"It really is an educational experience, and it's an enriching experience for the volunteers as well as the people we're preparing the Show for," Dugan said.

The Pennsylvania Convention Center is buzzing with activity in the days leading up to the Philadelphia Flower Show, which opens to the public this year on Feb. 29.

There are "mounds of soil" atop the center's concrete floor, lifts moving items around, and a number of hoses snaked through the venue to water the thousands of plants for the event.

Dugan said part of the reward of being a volunteer is that she has a behind-the-scenes look and gets to watch it come together.



Justin Trezza, Director of Garden Programs, shows off some of the work of the volunteers at a PHS managed Community Garden.

Dugan serves as a recorder for the Horticult, which is a competitive portion of the event, and she's responsible for making sure the plants are correctly identified and entered into the competition. "It's a totally (different) view of what a visitor would see when the show opens ... it's a really exciting thing to watch build," she said.

History of giving back

In her years working with PHS on the Flower Show, Greene says that giving back to the community has been a crucial part of PHS since the organization was established in 1827.

"From the beginning, we were an organization based on volunteers," she said. The group made a "commitment to the city" and has completed projects with gardening volunteers over the years at public landscapes like the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Fairmount Park.

The work of contributing to the greater good of the Greater Philadelphia region continues through a number of ongoing PHS volunteer opportunities.

They include:

- ❑ Azalea Garden Workdays from 9-11 a.m. every third Saturday

from April to November at the Philadelphia Art Museum space near Kelly Drive. No registration is required.

- ❑ Eastern State Penitentiary Terrace Garden Workdays from 9-11 a.m. every second Saturday of the month from April to November. No registration is required.
- ❑ PHS Meadowbrook Farm all year long at the facility on 1633 Washington Lane in Jenkintown, PA. For a current schedule, visit phsonline.org. Registration is required.
- ❑ Tree Plantings in April and November. For more information, visit phsonline.org.

Sign up

Greene says that interested gardeners can use VolunteerHub to sign up online for the organization's philanthropic opportunities.

"We always need help," She said. "We're really very happy to just welcome people, but we do ask that they sign up through VolunteerHub."

Greene said that gardening helps to benefit a person's mind, body, and soul. She added that it's something people can look forward to once the



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continued from page 8



Mindy Maslin, PHS Tree Tenders Project Manager, leads a group of PHS Tree Tenders in a Tree Planting in Philadelphia.

weather gets warmer.

"I think the exciting thing about the Flower Show is basically the beginning of spring, and people who've gone through a winter here in Philadelphia want to get outside, and they want to do some gardening," Greene said.

PHS is eager to welcome those who want to help "Garden for the greater good."

For more information about volunteer opportunities, visit the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's website at phsonline.org/get-involved/volunteer-opportunities/.

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2020 Philadelphia Flower Show Exhibits to WOW Guests for 191st Year

By Rachel Ravina
 rravina@21st-centurymedia.com



The exhibitors of this year's Philadelphia Flower Show went above and beyond to bring the theme of "Riviera Holiday" to life in their choice of décor, booth design, and of course, their selection of plants, flowers, trees and shrubs. From a replica version of Her Royal Highness Princess Grace's Rose Garden to a take on The Odyssey of Greece, this year's Flower Show will be an incredible experience for visitors hoping for a spring getaway, "Our exhibitors are some of the most creative people I've ever met,"

said Hannah Mullen, Operations Manager for the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. "They blow us out of the water every year with what they come up with."

Visitors this year are being treated to the most designer exhibits seen in a long time – more than 50 displays showcasing the Mediterranean region that came together after nearly a year of planning and hard work. The process of creating exhibits begins with invitations to exhibitors in May. Flower Show representatives then work with designers to cultivate ideas for their displays.

This year's variety in landscape, plant and garden society displays, floral, and educational categories represent "50 different ideas of what it means to be part of the Mediter-

ranean influence reflected in the 'Riviera Holiday' theme," Mullen said.

Exhibits to look for!

James and Helen Basson's exhibit, sponsored by Bank of America, is a take on 'The Odyssey' that captures the flavor of the Greek Isles.

Another highly anticipated exhibit pays homage to the royalty of Monaco. "We're having a special exhibit to honor Princess Grace who served as a Philadelphia Flower Show judge in 1976," Mullen said. The Princess Grace Rose Garden exhibit will have a replica wedding dress of the Monaco Princess, as well as an impressive rose garden reminiscent of the royal garden in Monaco. The exhibit, created by designer Renee Tucci, will have rose plants named for the Grimaldi family, fresh-cut

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garden rose arrangements, as well as potted roses in shades of pink, according to Philadelphia Flower Show organizers. "There is a great connection and a great history between Princess Grace and the Flower Show," Sam Lemheney, PHS Chief of Shows and Events, said. "Princess Grace loved flowers and loved roses and we are going to be showcasing that."

New and returning exhibitors

Vincent Roux, of Petit Jardin de Ville, in Philadelphia, is enjoying his first time creating an exhibit for the annual Flower Show. "When we heard the theme, it brought us back to where we come from," Roux said of the Riviera. Roux is originally from France and said this year's theme rekindled fond memories spending time in the French and Italian Riviera.

In the weeks before the show as he



was preparing his exhibit, Roux said he was looking forward to the results of his hard work. He was getting his plants from California, which added a layer of difficulty. "The plan is to coordinate to have those plants coming to us and being sure that they are

in their best look, so that's the challenge," Roux said.

Choosing the right plants is a large part of the planning, agreed exhibitor Christopher DiVito, a landscape designer for Burke Brothers in Wyndmoor. "I don't want to give away too

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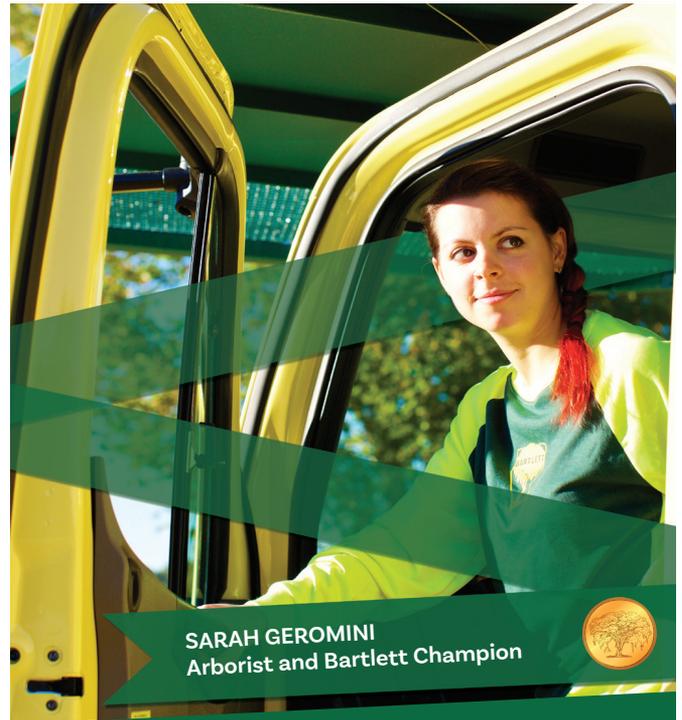


much, but we are using some plants that would be indigenous to that area,” DiVito said, referring to the Mediterranean region. “Most of it’s going to be sort of replicated,” he said, previewing his exhibit. “It looks like the real thing ... but we can’t give away all of our tricks.”

Burke Brothers has entered exhibits into the Philadelphia Flower Show for more than 20 years. DiVito said they modeled their exhibit as a “a courtyard scene similar to what you would see in small Italian villages,” complete with porch, trellis, and nearby olive orchards. The goal he said is “creating that intimate space, which is what you get the feeling of so much” when you think of the Riviera. “We’re excited, and I think everyone’s going to really enjoy it this year,” DiVito said.



For more information about the exhibits featured in the show, visit theflowershow.com.



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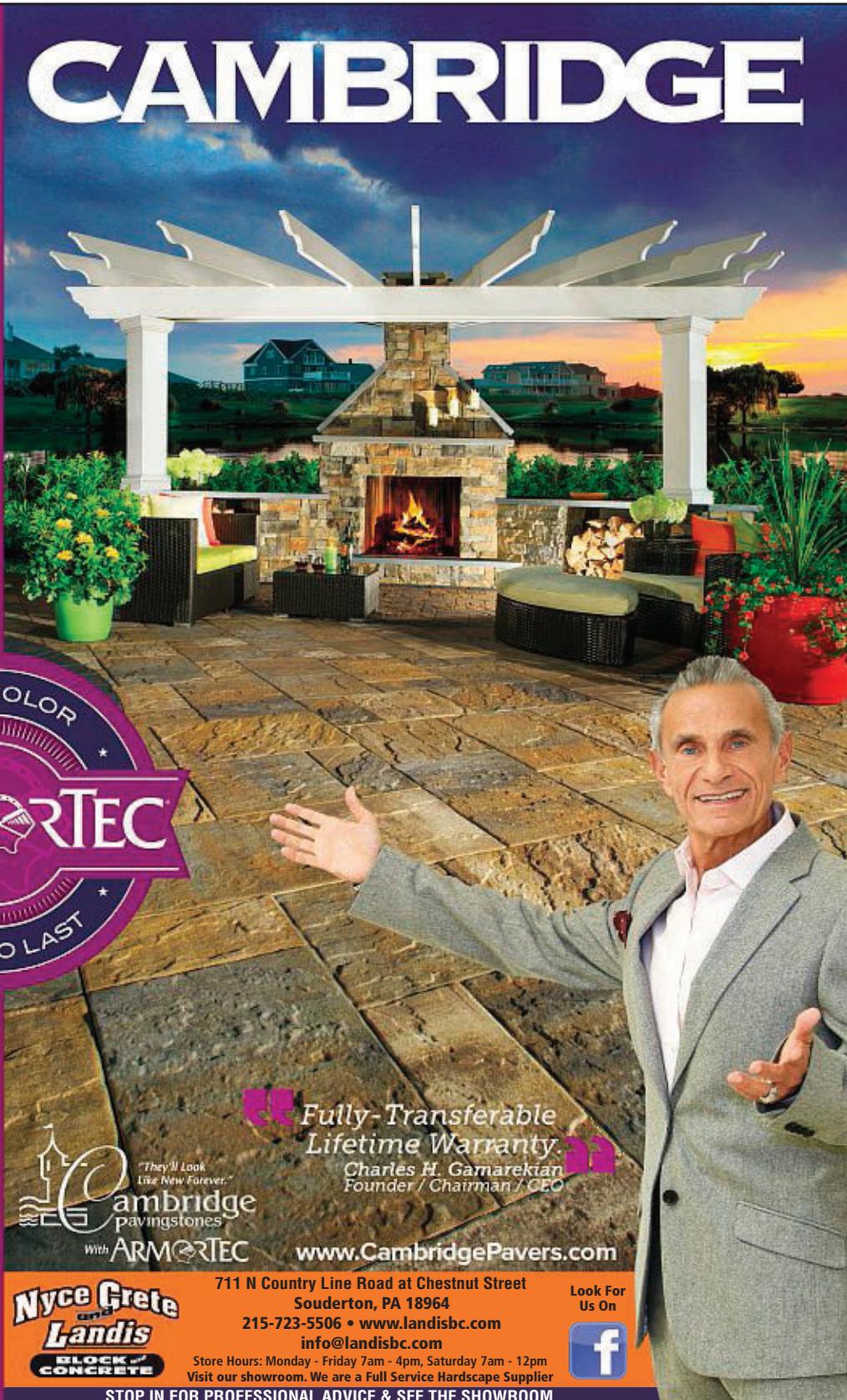
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PHS Spring programs are sprouting

By Rachel Ravina
rravina@21st-centurymedia.com

Strolling through the halls of the Philadelphia Flower Show can get attendees excited about gardening opportunities that the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society has to offer this spring.

“All these different programs are really designed to empower neighbors to garden together and create livable environments, grow economic opportunity, increase access to fresh food and help build connections with their neighbors,” said Julianne Schrader Ortega, PHS Vice President and Chief of Neighborhoods.

Down on the Farm

PHS Meadowbrook Farm, the organization's public garden in Abington Township, PA, has a variety of programming events that take place April through October at the farm located at 1633 Washington Lane. All activities are from 6 pm to 7:30 pm unless otherwise noted. Activities include:

First Thursdays: Fun with Flowers: Come learn how to grow and arrange a seasonal collection of flowers and foliage. You will create a stunning take home arrangement. Please BYO your beverage and snacks of choice. *May 7, June 4, July 2, August 6, September 3, October 1*
Fee: \$35 Members; \$40 Non-Members

Second Thursdays: Gardening in Small Spaces: Whether gardening indoors or out, small spaces can present challenges. Come learn techniques and plants that work well in these conditions. Take home a themed plant.

May 14, June 11, July 9, August 13, September 10, October 8
Fee: \$30 Members; \$35 Non-Members

VisitPHSONline.org for a full



schedule of the programming at PHS Meadowbrook Farm.

Third Thursdays: Seasonal Tours with a Twist: Seasonal tour of the Meadowbrook estate. Join our docent for a glass of wine and an intimate evening stroll through the house and gardens. *April 16, May 21, June 18, July 16, August 20, September 17, October 15*
Fee: \$25 Members; \$30 Non-Members

Fourth Thursdays: Pollinators: Join our Pollinator series to learn what to plant, and how to encourage pollinating birds and insects to your garden. Take home a themed pollinator plant. A discount is available for the entire series.

April 23, May 28, June 25, July 23, August 27, September 24
Fee: \$25 Members; \$30 Non-Members. Save and sign up for the series: \$125 for all six programs for Members or \$150 for Non-Members.

Fifth Thursday: May Day Eve Celebration at Meadowbrook – 4 pm to 7 pm: Join the Horticultural Staff for some fun family activities. Join us for kids' crafts, seasonal garden talks by our expert staff, short guided tours of the greenhouse space, and enjoy the opportunity to explore the estate house of J. Liddon Pennock, Jr. a former Flower Show judge and participant. Please feel free

to bring a picnic! This event is free, and registration is not required. *April 30*

Gardens are popping up

Seasonal PHS Pop Up Gardens in Philadelphia are great ways to learn more about gardening and horticulture in a social setting.

PHS Associate Director of Pop Up Gardens Cristina Tessaro said the gardening events are scheduled on many evenings from May through October.

Events including plant swaps, educational craft sessions, and food programs begin at 6 p.m. on Tuesdays at the organization's flagship site, 15th and South Street. Tessaro called the Pop-Up Gardens' series an “urban oasis” and encouraged everyone to attend.

Admission for the Pop Up Gardens is free, and interested participants can register with their name, address and zip code online at phsonline.org or onsite.

For more information about the Pop Up Gardens visit phsonline.org.

Tending to trees

For those who have the passion for giving back to your community, one of the best ways is to plant a tree, according to Mindy Maslin, PHS Tree Tenders Program Manager.

Maslin encouraged people interested in the environment to become Tree Tenders.

Tree Tenders learn to choose, plant, care for, and maintain trees as they grow, according to Maslin.

“The volunteers who get involved with the Tree Tenders program can come to our training and then learn how to make a difference -- not only in their own communities but also in the region,” Maslin said.

More than 5,000 people have become Tree Tenders since 1993 and over 1,800 trees were planted in 2019.

In order to become a certified PHS Tree Tender, individuals must attend nine hours of class provided over two or three sessions. The list of spring Tree Tenders classes is below:

- Bucks County: 6-9:15 p.m. on March 31, April 7 and April 14 at the Bristol Township Senior Center on 2501 Bath Road in Bristol.
- Chester County: 6-9:15 p.m. on May 14, May 21 and May 28 at the Upper Main Line YMCA on 1416 Berwyn Paoli Road in Berwyn.
- Philadelphia: 5:45-9 p.m. on May 6, May 13 and May 20 at the PHS Headquarters on 100 N. 20th St. in Philadelphia.

Sessions for Delaware and Montgomery counties will take place in the fall, but the specific times and locations have not yet been determined. Tree planting volunteers are not required to be a certified PHS Tree Tender to participate in seasonal plantings. Registration for classes is \$40.

To learn more, or register for Tree Tenders, visit PHSonline.org/.

Garden with neighbors

PHS work with over 150 community gardens in the city of Philadelphia encouraging “neighbors to grow food and plant flowers,” Schrader Ortega said.

“We help community gardens get established, and we work with established gardens to help them develop a generation of community leadership,” Schrader Ortega said. “We partner with another organization, the Neighborhood Garden Trust to ensure that the community gardens have secure access to land for permanent preservation.”

PHS offers gardening workshops, as well as materials and overall management. In 2019, the program donated over 250,000 seedlings to ensure access to healthy and fresh food to communities in need.

To learn more about community gardens, visit PHSonline.org.

Putting down roots

Roots to Re-entry, a job placement program, helps people recently released from incarceration gain experience and skills in landscape management.

Schrader Ortega added that the program provides internships, social support, leadership training, and jobs for program graduates with PHS employment partners.

Participants go through a “six-week bootcamp style training.” Trainees still in prison can opt for a 12-week program that concludes after they are released.

Schrader Ortega said the sessions take place in several locations including public gardens and vacant lots.

“Trainees learn these hands-on skills and contribute to improving Philadelphia communities. Our training curriculum is informed by employers and designed to help trainees meet the demands of jobs,” Schrader Ortega said.

For more information, visit PHSonline.org.

Reclaiming vacant lots

PHS has rehabbed more than 12,000 vacant lots across Philadelphia through its PHS LandCare Program. According to Schrader Ortega, volunteers remove debris, plant seeds, post fences, plant trees, maintain the sites, and neighborhoods get new “mini parks” as a result.

“We found that this treatment has amazing impacts on the neighborhoods,” Schrader Ortega said.

Studies show that people living within a five-minute walk of a greened lot showed nearly 41 percent reduction of feelings of depression. Additionally, 69 percent of people living in low-income areas that lived near a green lot reported decreased feelings of depression.

“If you’re living surrounded by lots that are totally neglected and covered in debris, that has a negative impact on your outlook on life,” Schrader Ortega said. Thus, when lots are rehabbed into green spaces, the greener difference can change the mood of an entire neighborhood.

To learn more about PHS LandCare, visit PHSonline.org.



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Gold Medal Plant program *featured at Flower Show*

By Rachel Ravina

Starting a garden can be overwhelming for the novice planter.

Knowing what to plant for the soil type, location, temperature, or amount of sunlight, and how much care is needed for different types of plants can help increase the success of a new gardening venture. Not to mention, what plants will add beauty?

The PHS Gold Medal Plant program is designed to answer some of those questions and serve as a gardener's resource for top plant selections.

Nurseryman Dr. J. Franklin Styer started the Gold Medal Plant program in 1979 because he wanted to provide valuable tips and tricks of the nursery trade to everyday gardeners.

Gold Medal Plants will be showcased by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society at the 191st Philadelphia Flower Show from Feb. 29 to March 8 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center.

"It's important for gardeners to have information to be able to make good choices of what to plant," said Julia Thomé, PHS Director of Gardener Engagement.

Andrew Bunting, PHS Vice President of Public Horticulture, agreed.

"One of our top goals is to inspire and teach the home gardener," Bunting said.

Removing the guesswork

Perennials, shrubs, trees, and vines are eligible for consideration as designated Gold Medal Plants.

The entries need to have aesthetic appeal, be hearty and serve an ecological purpose in order to meet the criteria as premiere choices. The plants are also well-suited for the particular growing region -- again improving a gardener's success with growth.

Gold Medal choices are labeled and visible throughout the Flower Show's Home Gardening Hub for the gardeners interested in learning more.

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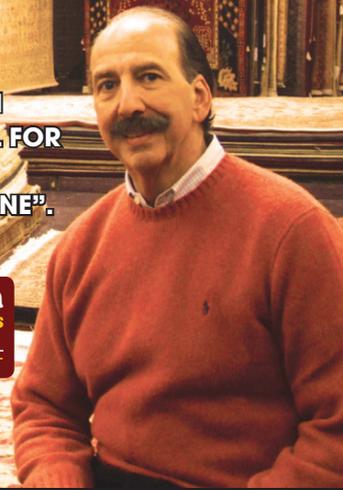
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When someone picks a flower, shrub or a tree to plant, Thomé would like them to make the right choice, and Gold Medal Plants help and set them up for success.

"It helps them make a smarter investment," Thomé said.

Anyone can enter a candidate for consideration to be on the Gold Medal list, and 10 to 30 nominations are received each year by PHS. A committee of plant experts and enthusiasts meets in January to receive nominations.

Once the nominations are vetted, the committee begins the selection process around June. The selections announced are highlighted at the following year's Flower Show.

People can often find these designated plants in public landscapes managed by PHS including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Eastern State Penitentiary, the Navy Yard, the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation, and PHS Meadowbrook Farm.

Thomé said PHS provides a preferred vendor list featuring several nurseries and garden centers that have Gold Medal Plants in stock. PHS members can also get a discount at select listed locations.

For more information about the Gold Medal Plant program, visit the organization's website at phsonline.org/programs/gold-medal-plants/.

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society awarded the following as Gold Medal Plants in 2019:



Coreopsis verticillata
'Zagreb' or 'Threadleaf Coreopsis' has bright, yellow flowers that are compact and upright. The plant reaches 12 to 18 inches and is easy to grow in the ground or in containers.



Carpinus caroliniana
'American Hornbeam,' also known as 'Ironwood' or 'Musclewood' is a small, understory, deciduous, and slow growing tree that grows between 20 and 30 feet tall and is commonly found near homes. The plant has Catkins in March, and yellow nutlets in late summer. It also has yellow-orange fall foliage, and Steel gray bark in the winter.

Perovskia atriplicifolia
'Little Spire,' also known as 'Russian Sage,' is a 2 to 3 feet tall drought tolerant "little spire compact and erect subshrub." It has light blue to violet color flowers with aromatic silvery foliage.



Geranium X cantabrigiense
'Biokovo' or 'Cranesbill Geranium' is low growing and compact, and will spread slowly as a groundcover. The species reaches 10 to 12 inches and has white flowers tinged with pink in spring.



Aronia melanocarpa
'Viking' or 'Black Chokeberry Flowers' is a deciduous shrub that blooms in spring, has black fruits and red fall foliage.



Hydrangea arborescens
'Haas Halo' or 'Smooth Hydrangea' is a drought resistant plant that has large lacecap flowers and blue-green foliage.

CHASE AWAY THE WINTER BLUES: Health and *Happiness* come from plants

By Rachel Ravina

The Philadelphia Flower Show is more than a respite from the dull days of winter, it's also an introduction to the health and well-being that plants provide.

"There is just something intrinsic about how accessibility to plants and nature positively influences and impacts people in so many different ways," said Andrew Bunting, Vice President of Public Horticulture for the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, which is staging the 191st Flower Show Feb. 29 to March 8 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center.

In fact, the health benefits are documented in studies which show psychological approach, mental well-being, and happiness increased by exposure to plants.

Julia Thomé, PHS Director of Gardener Engagement, agreed. "There is ample evidence that being in nature, in forests, and in gardens makes us happier...lowers blood pressure, burns calories, and encourages exercise," she said.

In her study "The Healing Power of Nature," Dr. Eugenia C. South, an Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, found "that simply walking past newly-greened vacant lots significantly decreased heart rate, a marker of acute stress."

The findings cite a myriad of physical and mental health-related benefits associated with plants:

- People living near green spaces experience reduced depression and improved mental health.
- Taking a walk outside can reduce rumination or "harmful thinking."
- Employees taking breaks in outdoor green spaces have lower stress and less burnout.
- People living on streets with trees have significantly lower cardio-metabolic disease including diabetes, hypertension and heart attacks.
- Pregnant women who are within 100 meters of a green space experience higher birth weights and healthier babies. The study also referenced the positive impacts that trees can have on a community.
- People in close proximity to green spaces socialized more with neighbors.
- Violent crime has been shown to decrease by as much as 29 percent in neighborhoods with green lots.



Encourages exercise

Gardening and interacting with horticulture can help build relationships between families, friends, and neighbors in communities. According to Thomé, gardening has been proven to build confidence, keep people moving, and promote exercise.

Planting herbs adds medicinal and culinary benefits, too.

"Herbs have been used for centuries in a multitude of ways," Bunting said, pointing out that this year's Riviera Holiday theme comes with a wealth of herbs that promote well-being.

"Rosemary, lavender, sage, thyme, oregano — those are all from the Mediterranean region," he said, and are all known for their culinary and aromatic benefits.

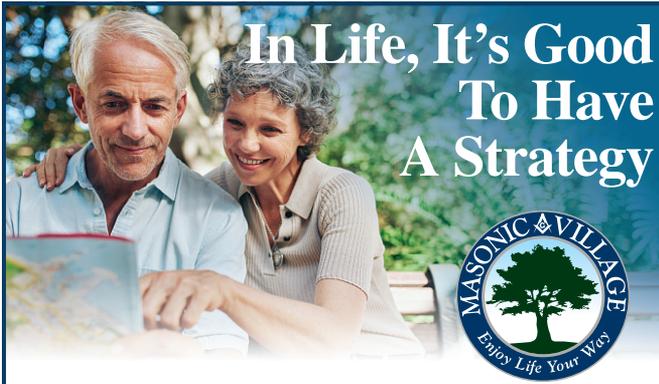
Ongoing benefit

PHS works with several programs to provide healthy food options throughout the year.

"There will be some vegetables on display at the Flower Show, and vegetables are a key aspect to the work that we do here at PHS," Bunting said.

Growing those vegetables in community gardens is a way to spread healthy benefits, said Julianne Schrader Ortega, PHS Vice President and Chief of Neighborhoods. In 2019, PHS donated over 250,000 seedlings to communities in need to ensure that they had access to fresh and healthy food.

PHS organizers also facilitate dialogue between horticulturalists and community gardeners so that growers get helpful tips and tricks leading to abundant harvests that can be shared with neighbors.



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Judging entries is more than meets the eye

By Rachel Ravina
rravina@21st-centurymedia.com

Every winter in Philadelphia, the region's top plant people and the world's talented floral and landscape designers converge at the Philadelphia Flower Show to fill the Pennsylvania Convention Center with the colors of spring and so much more. The designers, however, aren't just looking to show off their talents – the Flower Show brings out their competitive side as each display is judged by an expert panel in hopes of winning blue ribbons and the coveted “Best in Show” award.

The 191st Philadelphia Flower Show, hosted by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, runs from Feb. 29 to March 8 this year. The Show is famous for its tremendous displays of both beauty and horticulture skill. Exhibits in competition are awarded points within five categories, that include display gardens, educational, floral, landscape, and plant and garden societies. Each category then has three or four types of criteria including construction,

design, interpretation, quality, horticultural excellence, and educational value.

Some criteria are ranked higher and garner more points than others depending on the category, explained Hannah Mullen, PHS Operations Specialist. In landscape and display garden categories, for example, judges will look for creativity and interpretation of this year's Show theme “Riviera Holiday.”

Landscape and display gardens should also display quality, diversity, and a variety of plants, according to Mullen.

One other factor in this category is how well exhibitors have utilized forcing, or getting plants to grow out of season. “We really want to give them points for that,” Mullen said.

“In the floral categories, we're looking for quality and diversity as well as color composition, techniques, and mechanics,” she said.

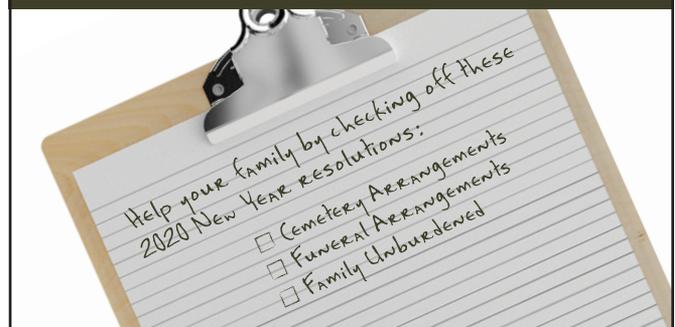
Students and other youth members entering an exhibit



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can receive extra points in the educational category to offset their lack of real-world experience.

"If they put the time and effort into making their garden something educational for someone, we want them to get a lot of points," she said.

Out of the ten acres of displays, thirty-eight large-scale exhibits are entered into this year's Flower Show, according to Mullen. Exhibits can receive points from judges that add up to the medals: 90 to 100 points for Gold, 80 to 89 for Silver; and 65 to 79 for Bronze. The exhibit that receives the most points is awarded the "Best in Show."

What to look for

According to Mullen, clear and accurate labeling of plants is something judges look for.

"When show visitors see a plant they like, and wonder what that plant is, they should be able to take that knowledge with them as part of their Flower Show experience," she said.

Judging is extensive, and each exhibit is vetted down to the smallest details including an individual plant within the exhibit.

Smaller entries

Thousands of individual plant entries in the Show are on display in "The Horticult" in Hall B. The competition includes non-professional participants and showcases hundreds of categories that are scored by judges on criteria including plant health and how well blooming plants have been forced or represent the plant category.

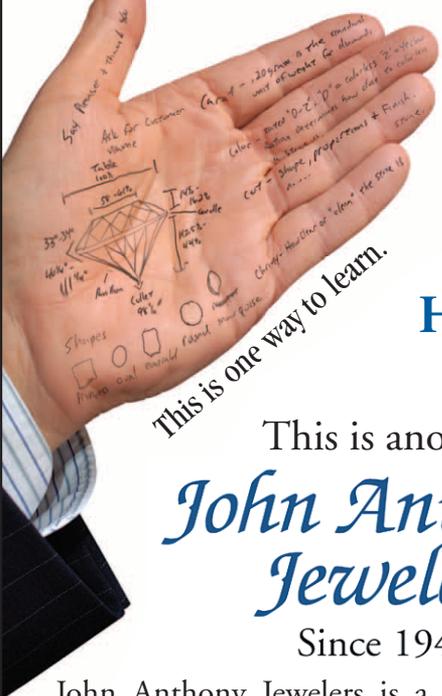
In addition to plants, individual floral arrangements are also judged in the Show's "artistic classes." They have criteria that can include form, interpretation of theme and balance as well as the use of negative space and how the background complements one's design, according to Seth Pearsoll, PHS Director of Design.

Anyone can enter

Pearsoll encourages everyone thinking about entering a plant for next year's Flower Show to participate.

He said he knows people who had an everyday pothos or a ficus plant at home and decided to take a chance at entering. Some of those first-year entrants have even gone home with blue ribbons.

The PHS website (phsonline.org) includes details on how to enter and ways to get started. There is also a schedule of workshops and hands-on experiences to help garden enthusiasts and the garden curious, to get involved at the Flower Show and with PHS throughout the year. Thousands of plant lovers have participated at the Show and continue to enter every year -- proving that the competition isn't just for the world's greatest professionals but also for those who simply love horticulture.





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Trees are unsung heroes of the earth

By Rachel Ravina
rravina@
21st-centurymedia.com

Trees are the “unsung heroes” of the earth. They’re good for the environment and good for people -- in mind, body and soul.

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society is spreading that message at the 191st Philadelphia Flower Show to inspire more tree planting and better tree tending in the Greater Philadelphia region.

“More efforts are needed to unify all of us that are working on tree planting and get as many people as possible interested in planting and caring for trees,” said Julianne Schrader Ortega, PHS Chief of Healthy Neighborhoods.

Some of the health benefits of trees include producing more oxygen in the atmosphere and improving the environment by minimizing stormwater runoff.

Mindy Maslin, Program Manager for the PHS Tree Tenders program, agreed.

“Trees do so much for us,” Maslin said admitting that her role makes her biased towards trees and tall plants. “I love the beauty of them. I love the wildlife they bring. I love the way the leaves rustle in the wind.”

Trees impact quality of life

Research shows there’s a lot more to those tall plants than aesthetics -- trees also have an impact on the economy and safety of neighborhoods.

“Studies show that trees and green spaces are associated with decreases in violent crime and increases in people’s feelings of well-being. Trees are proven de-stressors,” Schrader Ortega said.

Philadelphia’s goal for tree canopy (the area shaded by trees) is 30%, and Schrader Ortega emphasizes PHS’s commitment to tree planting and care. “I think that planting and caring for trees in regions around urban areas is probably the most important thing that citizens can do to help with their own health and the health of their community,” agreed Maslin.



Tree Tenders seeks volunteers

The PHS Tree Tenders program allows residents of Philadelphia and its major suburban counties to plant and maintain trees in their own neighborhoods.

But growing the tree canopy is not just about planting a tree and watching it grow. Experts emphasize the importance of tree care during the first two years after planting. “Trees need somebody to make sure that they’re getting enough water so that they can grow a stable root system ...and be set up for success for their lifetime,” Schrader Ortega said.

In order to become a certified PHS Tree Tender, individuals learn about community outreach, how trees grow, how to identify trees and how to pick the right tree for a specific location as well as care for newly planted trees.

Since its inception in 1993, more than 5,000 people have become PHS Tree Tenders. In 2019, the group planted more than 1,800 trees in the Greater Philadelphia region and hope to exceed that number in 2020.

PHS recommends participants be 16 years or older when attending a Tree Tenders Class, but almost anyone can take part in tree plantings with close parental or adult oversight.

Community groups provide shovels for volunteers, but encourage participants to bring their own if they have one.

‘More Trees Please’

Schrader Ortega encouraged people to donate to the PHS “More Trees Please” campaign, which aims to plant more trees across the area.

“Every year we have more requests for trees than we have funding to plant,” Schrader Ortega said.

For more information about the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society’s tree-related initiatives or to donate to “More Tree Please,” visit phsonline.org.

PHS offers organized tree plantings in April and November. To become a PHS Tree Tenders volunteer, sign up for one of the following sessions:

- Bucks County: 6-9:15 p.m. on March 31, April 7 and April 14 at the Bristol Township Senior Center on 2501 Bath Road in Bristol.
- Chester County: 6-9:15 p.m. on May 14, May 21 and May 28 at the Upper Main Line YMCA on 1416 Berwyn Paoli Road in Berwyn.
- Philadelphia: 5:45-9 p.m. on May 6, May 13 and May 20 at the PHS Headquarters on 100 N. 20th St. in the PHS Library in Philadelphia.

Sessions for Delaware and Montgomery counties will take place in the fall, but times have not yet been set. Registration costs \$40. To learn more, or register for the society’s Tree Tenders program, visit phsonline.org.

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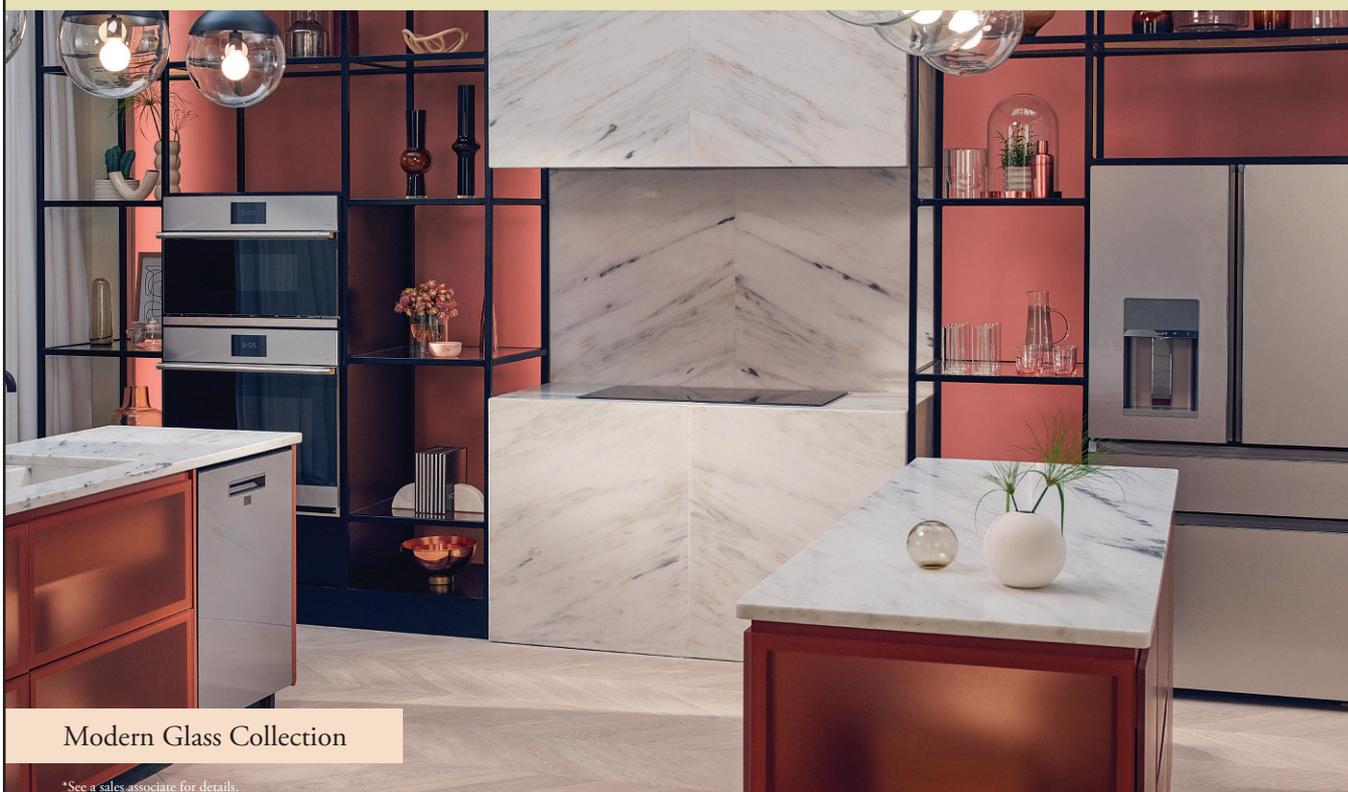
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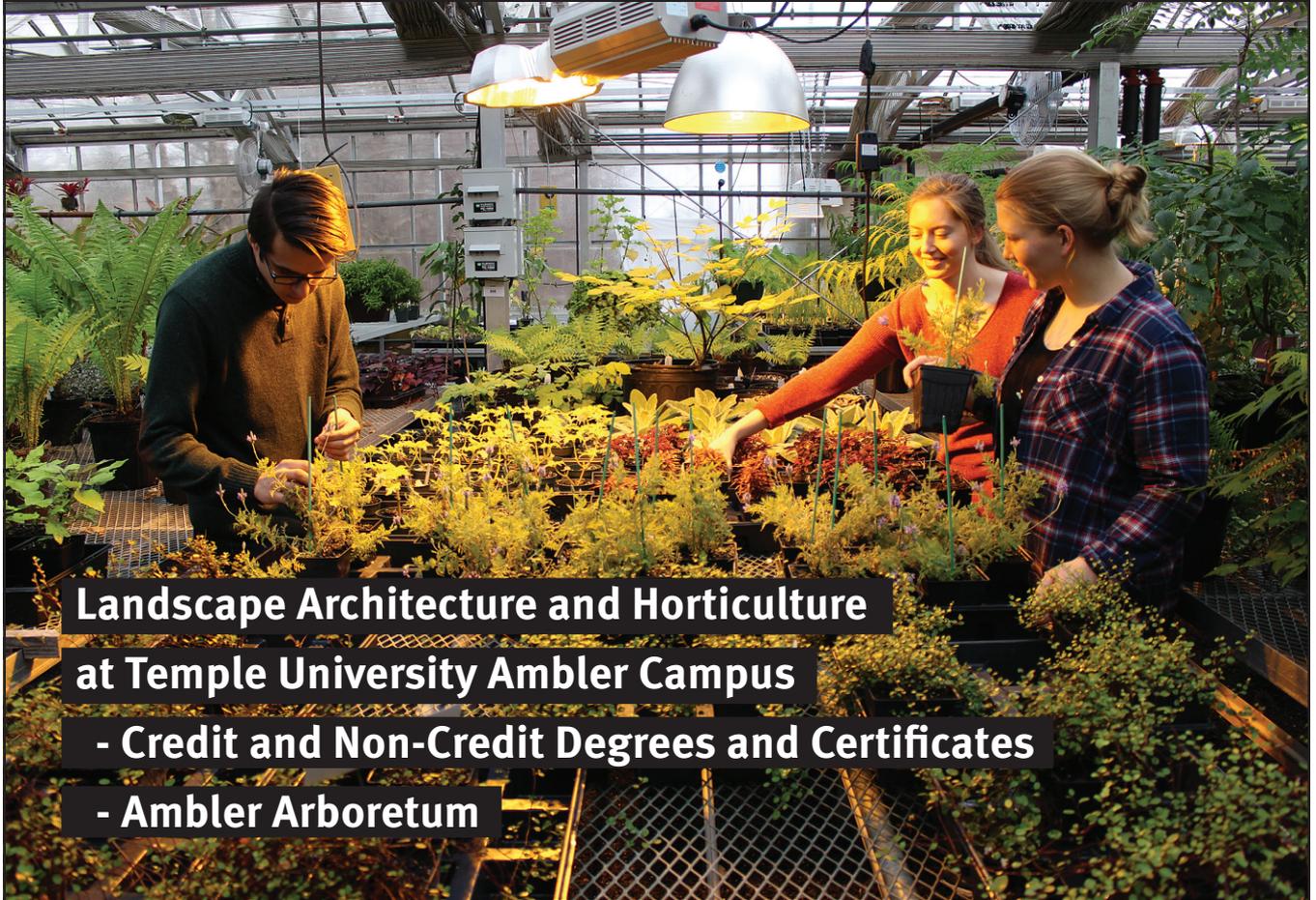


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