



CHAUTAUQUA
BIRD, TREE & GARDEN CLUB



BETSY BURGESSON ON THE SCENT OF THE MOCK ORANGE

THE MOCK ORANGE

The Mock Orange is a flowering shrub with a bloom that looks like an orange blossom—the genus name is *Philadelphus*. It's in the hydrangea family (*Hydrangeaceae*, along with hydrangeas and deutzias and other less common shrubs) and has a **lovely white early spring flower with a sweet scent like jasmine or orange blossom.**

The common understanding is that the genus name comes from the Greek word *philadelphus* meaning "loving one's brother or sister." Alternatively, the New York Botanical Garden suggests that the genus name comes from Ptolemy Philadelphus, son of Cleopatra and Mark Antony and a king of the third century B.C. He earned the name Philadelphus by marrying his sister. I'm not sure what he had to do with the shrub, but I consider the NYBG a trustworthy source and this fellow seems like a pretty fascinating character.

Now fast forward 2,000 years and spin your mental globe from Greece to Western New York and you'll arrive at the Mock Orange in the video above. In **1922, Mina Miller Edison (daughter of Chautauqua's co-founder Lewis Miller and wife of inventor Thomas Alva Edison) hired a famous Landscape Architect from NYC, Ellen Biddle Shipman, to design a new garden for Miller Cottage. They planted 40 Mock Orange in the gardens at Miller Cottage** at a cost of \$200. When the gardens were restored about **100 years later**, several of the original Mock Orange were found in the back left corner of the garden. (The Miller family did a really excellent job of caring for

the garden through the years.) While most of the original plantings were carefully dug up and tended to by Betsy and her crew offsite during the year-long renovation and then replanted after the garden was finished, the Mock Orange remained in place during the restoration. Check out the photo below of the lone Mock Orange in bloom in June 2019—that is one tough mudder.

However, not all of the Mock Oranges had survived the century, so new ones were added as part of the garden restoration in 2019. The modern cultivars have larger leaves and showier blooms, but they seem to be missing one thing—the scent. The older shrubs give off a strong and heavenly scent when they bloom in early summer, but the new ones have hardly any scent at all.

A recent post by the U.S. Botanic Garden stated that "Scientists have mapped the rose genome and are studying how specific genes affect scent.

Researchers are also exploring enzymes that generate geraniol, a component of fragrant rose oil....Hundreds of chemical compounds give roses their fragrance, a scent that differs from rose to rose. Old garden roses have strong floral scents, but most modern hybrid roses have little fragrance. Breeding focused on enhancing color and disease resistance, which inadvertently selected out scent in many varieties."

I am not aware of similar genome studies on the Mock Orange but we have something better—the nose of our own Betsy Burgeson and two data points growing 15 feet apart right here in the garden of our own National Historical Landmark of a cottage (Miller Cottage). If you are here in June, please take a deep sniff of the old mock orange and the new one. You will not believe the difference.

A "straight native" is basically a plant that has not been tampered with by nurserymen or botanists. It's still the way it evolved in nature. There are about 27 *Philadelphus* native to North America. There are an additional 33 *Philadelphus* native to Central America, Asia, and southeastern Europe. No one knows how many times those 60+ or so plants have been interbred and "improved" through the ages. In fact, if you research this question, the number of hybrids and cultivars is usually just noted as "countless."

I *wish* the original Mock Orange in the Shipman Garden were a North American straight native so we could smell that scent here, but it is not. We are lucky enough to have the original nursery orders from 1922 and we know that those Mock Oranges were *Philadelphus coronarius*, the same species as the newly planted Mock Orange, native to Asia Minor. Botanists have been importing, exporting, breeding and messing around with plants for a very long time to achieve their desired qualities in the offspring. The interesting thing here is that this one species has been "improved" so many times in only the last 100 years that we can easily detect the difference the breeding has had on the scent—it's nearly gone in the newer plants.

Leslie Renjilian

BTG President and Flower Sniffer

Below:

Shipman Garden Before and After Photos

with arrow on the original Mock Orange

Same viewpoint 2019 and 2023



The Shipman Garden in June 2019, showing the brand new steps leading into the rear garden from Vincent Ave. The stone outline of the planting bed is clearly visible. The old boarding house foundation, which serves as the rear wall of the garden, and the sloped retaining wall were rebuilt and reset using the same stones in the days following this photo.



The same view of the back corner of the Shipman Garden. Now, in 2023, the walls are still visible but softened by the plantings. The stone path leading to the fountain had been buried under turf for years, but was unearthed and reset in the new lawn, which is naturalized (not treated with chemicals and looks much as it would have in 1922).

A brief post script about Gardener Guilt and Native Plants

You'll hear a lot of chatter at the BTG about the importance of native plants. Some of you have been preaching this gospel for decades and we laud and thank you.

However, most of us inherited a garden full of non-natives or planted what we trustingly bought at the local nursery and found pleasing and hardy... which turned out to be non-native or even invasive.

As we all learn more about the importance of native plants and learn to

appreciate their (sometimes more subtle) beauty, we are striving for gardens that follow Doug Tallamy's 80:20 rule of native to non-native plantings. In other words, as you replace and update your own plot, choose native with the long-term goal of a garden that is 80% native. That's what we are slowly doing and we hope you will too.

Start with a small area - Betsy suggests we pull up the vinca and put it in the trash (not the compost—you don't want the seeds to self-sow) and replant with something like violets. [Learn more here.](#)

Many of you at the Francesca Rappole Re-dedication Ceremony and Night Garden Walk on Friday asked where to find the elusive moonflower and other native plants in the garden. Here's a link to the two nurseries Betsy mentioned. Check them out!

[Herb Mill - Niobe NY](#)

[Royal Fern Nursery - Fredonia, NY](#)



DAY BY DAY WITH THE BTG

Monday, July 31

4:15 PM [Lake Walk: "Algae / Food Web: Helpful and Harmful" with Dr. Allison Hrycik, PhD](#)

Location: Meet at Shoreline & Wetland Gardens by the Pier Building

Tuesday, August 1

12:15 PM [BTG Brown Bag Lecture: "Nature's Pirates: Invasives in the Landscape" with Betsy Burgeson](#)

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall

4:15 PM [Garden Walk with Horticulturist Joe McMaster](#)

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall - meet on lakeside patio

Wednesday, August 2

8:00 AM [Wednesday Weeding](#)

Location: Meet at Ravine (continue on Massey past the Butterfly Garden to the other side of the Ravine)

12:30 - 2:30 PM [Open Garden: Shipman Garden at Miller Cottage](#)

4:15 PM [Tree Walk with Naturalist Jack Gulvin](#)

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall - meet on lakeside patio

Thursday, August 3

8:00 AM [Bird Walk with Ruth Lundin](#)

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall - meet at entrance
Bring binoculars if you have them, and please leave dogs at home!

12:30 - 2:30 PM [Open Garden: Shipman Garden at Miller Cottage](#)

Friday, August 4

9:00 AM [Nature Walk with Naturalist Jack Gulvin](#)

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall - meet on lakeside patio

12:30 PM [Garden Walk with Betsy Burgeson](#)

Location: [Butterfly Garden](#) (at Massey and South Avenues by the South Gate)

Sunday, August 6

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM [Life Members Event: Subagh Preserve Forest Walk with Cassie Ziegler, National Aviary](#)

Join fellow Life Members on a field trip to the Subagh Preserve! Cassie Ziegler from the National Aviary will lead us on a walk through the forest explaining how active management can improve bird diversity and habitat.

*We will caravan and carpool to the preserve, which is only 3 miles from Chautauqua. Limited to 15 participants plus a few guests from FSF. **\$10 per participant.***

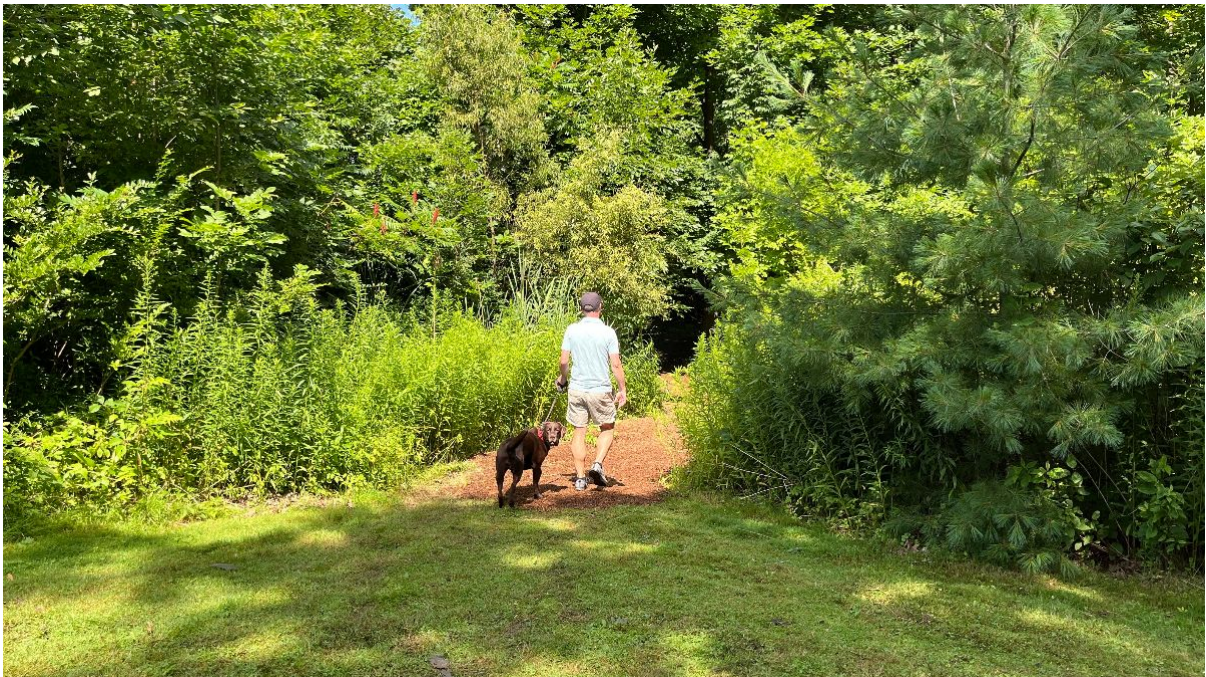
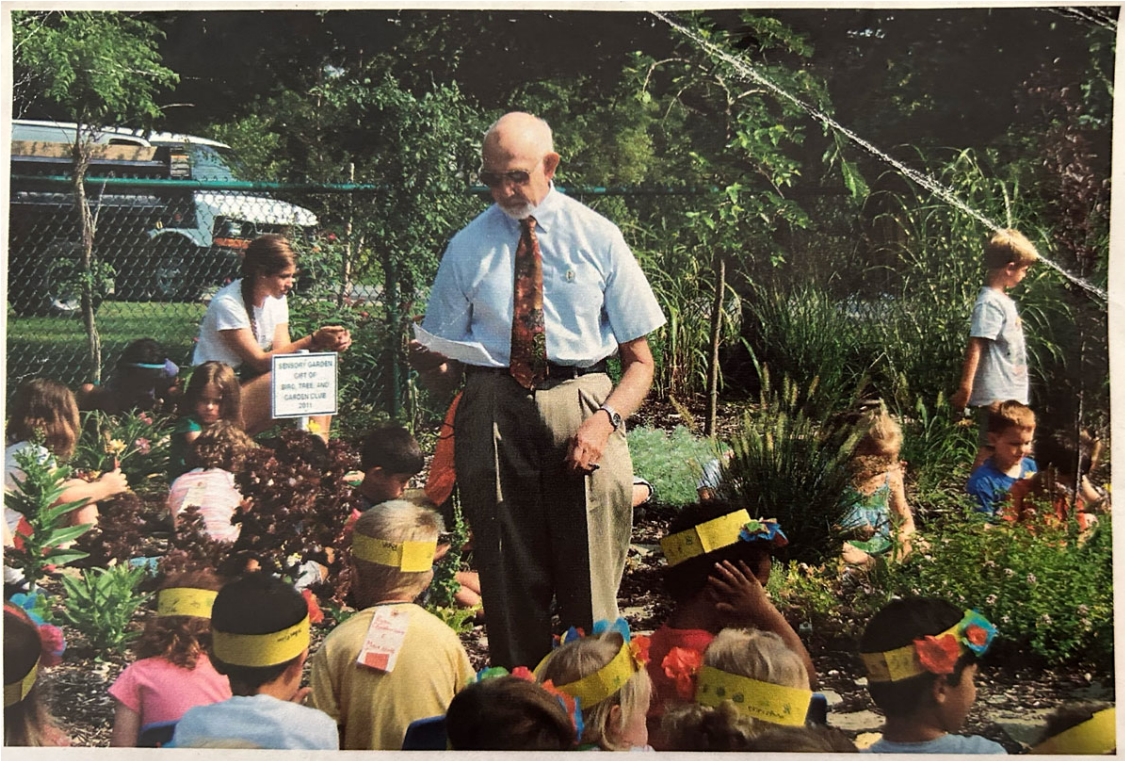
See flyer below or our website for more details.

CHILDREN'S SCHOOL SENSORY GARDEN PHOTO MONTAGE



Above: Sandy and Nick Stupianski work the [Sensory Garden at the Children's School](#) The photos above were a part of a big spread in the July 17 Chautauquan Daily and are reprinted here courtesy of photographer Brett Phelps.

Below: Former BTG President Norm Karp at the 2011 Dedication of the Sensory Garden



THE SECRET SILO GARDEN

Wednesday Weeders Update

It's amazing what progress can be made with a few extra hands. Our Wednesday weeder volunteers have succeeded in making a major dent in the removal of invasive plants in the area of the Silo Garden. And there are still three more opportunities to participate. We are slowly saying goodbye to the privet, bush honeysuckle and Japanese knotweed that are attempting to outcompete our native black cherries, pagoda dogwood, and white oaks. The vinca vine that you may love in your planters is not a useful ground cover in a natural area as it crowds out and strangles natives trying reach a bit of sunlight. "So long vinca!"

As you can see from the pictures our Weeders uncovered a native wildflower garden that was installed in 2003 but had become overrun and hidden beneath layers of privet and ash saplings. We even found the actual "silo" concrete pad for which the area is named. Thank you to everyone who has helped thus far. I wish I'd taken all your names so I could call you out to everyone but please

know that we are exceedingly grateful for your help!

Going forward the Wednesday weeders will meet on the Bryant Gate side of the ravine on Massey between Hawthorne and Emerson. Look for our tell tale bikes, bags of tools, and tarps.

See you soon - Jean Fulkerson



Above: Volunteer Sarah Hughes and Lily Burgeson in the foreground at the site of the Secret Silo and other volunteers in the background.





Original plants found by the weeding team. From top to bottom (or left to right if you're on a computer): St. John's wort, wild ginger, and bloodroot.



Above and below: Garden dedication markers uncovered by the weeders.



