

C H A U T A U Q U A



BIRD  
TREE  
&  
GARDEN  
CLUB



## What's in Bloom?

A: Hydrangeas!

Around the grounds of Chautauqua, the showiest hydrangeas this year are the Annabelles, with their big white swaying cumulus cloud flower heads. Also called smooth hydrangeas, the scientific name is *Hydrangea arborescens*.

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Scroll down for a photo primer of other kinds of hydrangeas in bloom. There are over 75 different varieties of hydrangeas, but we've showcased the ones most commonly found here.

Many of us have hydrangeas in our yards, and so have all kinds of questions about their care. So here are Betsy's answers to your most FAQs:

**Question:** When and how should I prune my hydrangeas?

**Betsy:** The simple answer is: Not after the beginning of August. The more complicated answer is that some hydrangeas (Smooth Hydrangea, Panicked Hydrangea, and the Endless Summer Series of Big Leaf Hydrangea) bloom on new growth while others (Oakleaf, Lacecap and Mophead Big Leaf, and Climbing Hydrangea) bloom on "old" wood, aka the prior year's growth. If you prune them near the end of the season, you clip off the flower buds for next year. So you should figure out what kind you've got and ask the internet for more details. Also, put on your readers and look closely - never cut off a bud.

**Question:** My Annabelle hydrangeas are slumped. How do you get them to stand up straighter like yours?

**Betsy:** Well, many have supports hidden inside them. When they first leaf out in the spring, our crew installs ring supports which the hydrangeas grow through and hide. Others are supported by their garden companions, underplantings of shorter but sturdy stemmed perennials such as butterflyweed or purple coneflowers.

**Question:** How do you get them to be more blue? Pink?

**Betsy:** Using nails or coffee grounds to change the acidity of the soil is a fun experiment and sometimes works. However, a more scientific method would be to test the acidity of your soil (using a test kit or by sending a sample to your county extension service) and then gradually adjust the pH by using lime (for pink) or a soil acidifier, such as pine needles or elemental sulfur (for blue). This won't be a one-and-done fix because your soil will revert to its natural state over time. So retest and retreat. Or sit back and accept whichever color your soil gives you....

**Question:** Sometimes when I cut (or buy) hydrangeas stems to use indoors they last forever, but sometimes they wilt right away. What can I do?

**Betsy:** You can take a wilted blossom and turn it upside down in a big mixing bowl of water. Hydrangeas can absorb water through their petals. Sometimes it takes a day or two, but they will almost always plump back up and you can return them to a vase. It's a good idea to trim the stem an inch or two at this time since the xylem will have sealed up in the air.

**Question:** What's the deal with Tree Hydrangeas? The ones along Lake Drive are so cute and the ones in the Chautauqua Cemetery are downright supernatural.

**Betsy:** So glad you asked! Please [click here](#) to be redirected to the BTG exploreCHQ app and read about Tree Hydrangeas (spoiler alert – they're just big shrubs pruned into tree forms and the ones in the cemetery are very old).

### Chautauqua Hydrangeas in Bloom Right Now



Photos above:

1. **Oak Leaf Hydrangeas** growing along the wall in Odland Plaza. These are native in the southeast United States, but do quite well here. They have beautiful fall color. The scientific name is *Hydrangea quercifolia* and they bloom on OLD wood.

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2. **Panicle Hydrangeas** along Cookman by Alumni Hall. There are also lovely and huge ones in front of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Panicle Hydrangeas are the ones used to "make" tree hydrangeas. Also called PeeGees, the scientific name is *Hydrangea paniculata* and they bloom on NEW wood.



Photos above:

3 & 4: Endless Summer Hydrangeas - as the name suggests, these are repeat bloomers and are famous because they are the color-changers. White hydrangeas like the Annabelle cannot turn blue or pink no matter what your neighbor tells you to sprinkle on the soil. But these guys do change depending on soil acidity. The front steps to the President's Cottage at 55 North Lake Drive is lined with Endless Summer. Endless Summer is a cultivar of Big Leaf Hydrangea. Their scientific name is *Hydrangea macrophylla* and they bloom on OLD AND NEW WOOD! See caption below #6 & 7 for more details.



Photos above:

5. When you don't know the cultivar of a hydrangea that looks like this one, you sometimes just call it a "mophead" or "bigleaf." The classic beauty in this photo could be any or none of these common cultivars: Blue Deckle, Nikko Blue, Tokyo Delight, Pretty in Pink, Forever Pink, Pistachio, and Endless Summer. Although the names imply a color, in the end it all has to do with soil acidity, so even if you buy a plant in bloom, the color you see next year will depend on your soil.

6. Lace Cap Hydrangeas - as the name implies, the flower is not a big mop head, but rather a ring of larger petals around a center section of short flowers that look like buds. "These are growing in my own garden at 25 South Ave,' says Leslie. "I included it in order to balance this block of gorgeous photos, but also I think they are so pretty and delicate. Stop by anytime to see them or chat with me.)"

Both the Lacecap and the Mophead are Big Leaf Hydrangeas. The scientific name is *Hydrangea macrophylla* and they both bloom on OLD wood.

- all photos by Angela James except #6

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# Day by Day by the BTG

**Sunday, July 31**



**8:30 PM SPECIAL BTG EVENT: Explore Evening Sounds & Behaviors of Insects and Other Wildlife at CHQ with Twan Leenders**

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall

Note: The Daily listed this program at 8pm and 8:30pm. This mistake was likely our fault and we apologize for the error. The program will begin at 8:30. We'll just sing and dance for the unlucky folk who show up at 8pm. Please pass the word!

**Monday, August 1**



**6:30 PM Lake Talk: "The History of Chautauqua Lake Ecology and Diatoms" with Courtney Wigdahl-Perry, Professor of Biology, SUNY Fredonia**

Location: Heinz Beach

**Tuesday, August 2**



**4:15 PM Garden Walk with Betsy Burgeson, Supervisor of Gardens and Landscapes at CHQ**

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall

\*Including an introduction to the newly refurbished **Francesca Rappole Night Garden!**

**8:30 PM SPECIAL BTG 'Old First Night' EVENT: Track the Bat Population in Chautauqua with bat biologist Jonathan Townsend**

Special Guest Star Appearance and Introduction by Caroline Bissell, the Bat Lady

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall

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Please note that there is no Brown Bag Lecture on August 2 because of CLSC Recognition.

### **Wednesday, August 3**



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

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall - lakeside patio

### **Thursday, August 4**



#### **7:30 AM [Bird Walk with Ornithologist Twan Leenders](#)**

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall entrance

\* Binoculars encouraged, dogs discouraged!

### **Friday, August 5**



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

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall - lakeside

#### **12:00 PM [Life Member Luncheon](#)**

Location: Athenaeum Hotel Parlor

Note: this is a ticketed event and is sold out. If you missed your chance this year, please join us in 2023. It'll be here before you know it!

Note: there will not be a 12:30 Garden Walk on August 5 because of the Life Member Lunch

**\*\*Most BTG walks involve some uneven ground. We suggest sturdy shoes.\*\***

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# Caution: Habit(at)- Forming!



## Monarch Watch and National Wildlife Federation Habitat Certifications

by Chris Flanders

For those of you who qualified your Chautauqua gardens or the gardens at your winter homes as Monarch Waystations, we have great news for you: your garden will also qualify as a National Wildlife Habitat, a place for everything to live from butterflies to bugs and from birds to bees.

The BTG is collaborating with the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy to get Chautauqua County certified as a National Wildlife Habitat. The reasoning is the same as helping to save the dwindling Monarchs; give them food, water, the right plants, and a place to hide from predators and their chances of survival as a pollinator increase. All of you whose gardens qualified in the past few years can add this important certification to your garden. In turn you'll help hundreds



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of pollinators that you see in and around your garden and some so small you may never see them.

(And of course, if you haven't qualified your garden as a [Monarch Waystation yet, you can learn more about that here.](#))

By joining the National Wildlife Federation, you can display another sign in your garden, but more importantly you will receive their monthly magazine filled with stories and reports of current ecological research. You can also opt for their email newsletter. In a time when we are reeling from political strife and economic insecurities, our planet as a whole and your little part of the soil can really make a difference in our future quality of life. The more we can support the animals who in turn support us, the better off we will all be. Think again about providing habitat, not just for the Monarchs but for all living things.

[Click here](#) to be redirected to the NWF.org Certification Page. It will cost \$20 to join and certify. A sign will cost you an additional fee.

Please join the BTG and the NWF joint project to certify the gardens and greenspaces of Chautauqua County. Any questions can be sent to [chautauquabtg@gmail.com](mailto:chautauquabtg@gmail.com) site or stop by the weekly BTG Tuesday Brown Bag Lectures in Smith Wilkes Hall and we will help you with this certification.

*About the Author:*

*Chris Flanders is on the boards of the BTG and the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy. She also wrote the book (literally) on the Bemus Point Ferry, she has a Coast Guard Captain's License and a NYS Pilot Engineers License and DRIVES THE FERRY!! Plus she helped to raise the funds to rehabilitate the ferry. [Click here to watch an interview](#) Chris gave about her work on the ferry.*

*Chris is also a Master Gardener. And a retired Nurse Practitioner. And there's more, I'm sure. This is a person you want to know. Even if you think you don't care about certifying your garden with the NWF, you should just make up a question so you can connect with this exceptional woman.*