

Horticultural Field Day 2003

by Kay Van Allen, The Lynchburg Garden Club

Horticultural Field Day 2003, hosted by the Garden Club of the Northern Neck, was a gangbuster two-day event.

On the first day we visited the lush English garden of Charlotte and Jim Hundley in Heathsville.

Charlotte and Jim, rosarians both, are experienced competitors and judges for the American Rose Society. They have over 300 roses in their collection and share willingly their knowledge about growing and showing their favorite flowers.

Just down the road the Hundley's daughter, Gayle Morston and her husband Sam, have created a charming herb garden to complement the ancient boxwood bordered rooms where several generations of children have played.

Our third destination was the Olsen garden, an expansive and utterly wonderful place. Over the last 18 years, Ann and John have planted both familiar and unusual plants to create an enchanting and interesting garden that lures the visitor from one garden room to the next.

Our first stop on day two was the home of Lynne and Hudson Hoen. Here, tall hollyhocks and other pastel rose perennials greeted us. An inviting path drew us through a fragrant, rose covered arbor to look out past the green swath of lawn, over the perennial beds, to a peaceful view of the water beyond. The undulating borders of flowerbeds repeat the shape of the shoreline beyond and the cool water offered a deep contrast to the pastel palette of blooms.

Stop two, Rockvilla, was aptly named as a prodigious number of rocks were used to create the walkways and steps that complete Jacquie and Tom Colligan's fascinating garden. A giant curly willow centers the circular front drive. Several Dawn Redwoods lend a softening air to the intricate stone terraces.

At Mary Lloyd and David Lay's home, majestic mature oak trees form the arching ceiling for this cathedral of plant life, and every room is filled with interesting and varied plants. David's knowledge of native plants, combined with Mary Lloyd's enthusiasm and wit, has created a uniquely harmonious Eden on this secluded point of land.

From here we made our way to the cozy home of Anne and Maurice Dickerson. A clearing in this heavily wooded lot creates a grassy island surrounded by shady perennial beds and punctuated by a Zen rock feature. This calm cove seems to be a natural habitat for mounds of mountain laurel.

Our final stop was the lovely Georgian home of Frances Simmons where a handsome serpentine brick wall forms the backdrop for lovingly tended perennial beds. Huge American yew topiaries, planted by Frances and her late husband over 20 years ago, stand as sentinels at the corners of a grassy glade.

Full of fresh ideas and inspiration, we left the Northern Neck. Already we are anticipating next year's Horticultural Field Day, which will be held in Virginia Beach.