

August 2023

# NHLA

# NEWSletter

Vol. 39 No. 7

Informing and educating members of the Green Industry

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New  
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ASSOCIATION



## Bigger, Better NHLA Field Day Coming Up Sept. 20

**N**HLA's second Field Day is fast approaching. Be sure to join us on Wednesday, September 20, at the Belknap County Fairgrounds in Belmont, NH. This year's event will have more credit classes, more vendors, and more exhibitors, as well as indoor spaces for classes and vendors.

Classes will include *Working Safely with Ticks*, *Using Drones in Landscape Design*, a pair of two-hour chain saw safety sessions, a DES class on waterfront/stream permitting, and Cooperative Extension credit classes on plant identification and other topics.

We'll also build a fire pit for the fairgrounds and plant a new maple tree, both for credits.

*Vendor registration:* [nhlaonline.org/registration-page-vendor/](http://nhlaonline.org/registration-page-vendor/)

*Attendee registration:* [nhlaonline.org/registration-attendee/](http://nhlaonline.org/registration-attendee/)

See you there!



The *NHLA Newsletter* is published by the New Hampshire Landscape Association for its members, free of charge, 10 times a year.

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See enclosed application or the website for a membership application.

**Additional Subscriptions:** Firms desiring additional subscriptions, can purchase them at \$40.00 each. Contact Pamela Moreau.

**Editorial Submissions and Advertising:** Articles and notices for publication should be sent to Carolyn Isaak, Editor. Advertisers wishing to appear in the *NHLA Newsletter* should submit their ads to Annette Zamarchi. The editorial and advertising submissions schedule is online at [nhlaonline.org/nhla-newsletter](http://nhlaonline.org/nhla-newsletter).

The *NHLA Newsletter* seeks to encourage a lively discussion of topics of concern to NHLA members. Opinions and proposals presented in the newsletter are those of the writers to whom they are attributed and are not a statement of official policy by NHLA, unless so stated.

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## President's Notes

by Andrew Pelkey

**M**id-Summer slump... Speaking from my personal experience in the landscape industry, August tends to be a slower time.

For those of you on the landscape maintenance side of things, spring clean-ups, mulch, and flowers are done, and you're finishing up the last of your summer pruning and settled into weekly mowing and bed maintenance. Commercially speaking, enhancements tend to see a slump unless you were able to push some of that work off to this time of year.

*Maybe you like to use this time to catch up and reengage in things you didn't have time for during the busy season.*

On the installation side of things, hopefully your schedule is booked from the busy spring in-flow, but sales during the month of August tend to be a bit slower due to a few factors. One main component is that your clients are taking their summer vacations and spending time with the kids while they are off on school break.

Maybe you would like to follow suit and use this month to relax and regroup. Or maybe, you are like me and like to use this time to catch up and reengage in things you didn't have time for during the busy season.

From a sales perspective, it's a perfect time to start talking about fall services with your clients as well as snow and ice sales, and from a production side, it's a solid



time to start going through the winter equipment.

It is also a good time to map out your fall and winter, look into the different educational resources available through NHLA to continue to further

your knowledge in the Green Industry. Our events page on our website always has the latest schedule.

I hope that you all do take some time to recharge before the fall rush. 🌻

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# 2023 NHLA Field Day



**Wednesday, September 20, 2023 (Rain or Shine)**

Registration - 8:00am (Refreshments)    Schedule of Events - 8:30am – 3:00pm

Belknap County 4-H Fairgrounds - 174 Mile Hill Rd, Belmont, NH

Registration - **Member** - \$25.00 ~ **Non-Member** - \$45.00

Day of Event– **Member** - \$35.00 ~ **Non-Member** - \$50.00 ~ **CASH/CHECK only**

ALL payments must be received no later than September 13, 2023 to guarantee your registration. If you need to cancel after September 13<sup>th</sup>, you will incur a 50% processing fee. Thank you for your understanding!

Vendor Registration – Small \$500, Large \$800 – see attached for details

Lunch - Food for Purchase at Food Trucks **OR** Bring Your Own Lunch

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## Tree and Shrub ID Workshop at Distant Hill Gardens

Join UNH Extension educators Matt Kelly and Matt Tarr, on Thursday August 24 from 2-5 pm, for a Tree and Shrub Identification Workshop at Distant Hill Gardens and Nature Trail in Walpole and Alstead, NH. This three-hour workshop will take place in the forest, fields, and wetlands of Distant Hill.

Learn how to identify numerous native species of shrubs and trees, along with a few invasive plant species, by using the plant's leaves, bark, branching patterns, smell, taste, habitat, cones, and fruits as clues.

This workshop will be held outdoors on the gently rolling wheelchair and stroller accessible Distant Hill Nature Trail. The workshop is free, but registration is required. Go to: [eventbrite.com/cc/distant-hill-gardens-and-nature-trail-2023-events-225849](https://eventbrite.com/cc/distant-hill-gardens-and-nature-trail-2023-events-225849)



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## Pollinator Friendly Garden Certification Program

Through a partnership with UMaine Extension, UNH Extension hosts the NH Pollinator Garden Certification program, providing gardeners, landscapers, property managers and others guidance in providing for the needs of pollinators as well as the opportunity to show off their garden's "pollinator friendly" status.



*To be eligible for certification, a garden provides adequate food, water, and shelter for pollinators; and gardeners commit to employing conservation practices. Eligible pollinator-friendly gardens are pesticide-free and display a variety of native plants providing pollen and nectar as well as host plants for caterpillars. Gardens include water sources as well as areas of shelter, such as rock walls, dead wood, or other areas of safe habitat. Guidance for planning or modifying a garden to meet the criteria is provided on the UMaine website.*

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Once a garden space is certified, a metal garden sign can be ordered to display at the garden showing the space's "pollinator-friendly" status. The purchase of a sign supports the Master Gardener program and pollinator- and conservation-focused Extension education.

If you or a client would like more information about this program, contact UNH Extension's home horticulture program: [answers@unh.edu](mailto:answers@unh.edu) or 1-877-EXT-GROW.

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# NHLA's Summer Twilight Meetings Focused on Making Things Grow

by Mike Barwell, NHLA Education Coordinator

In June, more than 20 members gathered at Bedrock Gardens in Lee, NH, to tour an ongoing lifelong commitment to changing a landscape.

Co-founder Jill Nooney and executive director John Forti guided the group through a personalized tour of the multi-acre themed gardens featuring trees, shrubs, perennials, and artwork by Jill.

The hallmarks of the displays include oriental and native perennials, as well as arbors, water courses, and a somewhat quirky and kinky secret woods.

In July, more than 20 members and guests toured Van Berkum Nursery in Deerfield, NH.

Founded in 1987 by Leslie

and Peter van Berkum, new owner John Gedraitis toured the propagation, production, and greenhouses that specialize in perennials and native plant species.

John talked extensively about the nursery's growth and focus on local native New England plants, a passion that has been a focus of Van Berkum Nursery for almost four decades.

"We strongly believe in the importance of native plants and their vital ecological role in our landscapes and are of the opinion that stewardship and gardening are not mutually exclusive," he said. "While we appreciate the color and textures that the perennial palette brings to the



Jill Nooney describes her creative process.

garden, we also want to augment the landscape as we all strive to incorporate more natives."

This completes the 2023 Twi-

light Meetings. Plan on joining us for the 2023 Field Day on Sept. 20 at the Belknap County Fairgrounds.



John Gedraitis, far left, discussing Van Berkum Nursery's growth and its concentration on natives.



*"We strongly believe in the importance of native plants and their vital ecological role in our landscapes and are of the opinion that stewardship and gardening are not mutually exclusive."*







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## Do the Right Thing, Always

Pillar #3 of the North Point Outdoors

Ten Pillars of Culture

by Andrew Pelkey, NHLA President

**D**emonstrate an unwavering commitment to doing the right thing in every action you take and in every decision you make. Even when no one is looking. Always tell the truth. If you make a mistake, own up to it, apologize and make it right.

Some may say this is an easy pillar to adhere to on the surface. Staying consistent to always do the right thing pays major dividends to both your clients and the team you have supporting them.

A big contributing factor to North Point Outdoors' growth over the last decade has been that we always make right by the client, even if it is to our detriment. We know that losing margin on a job but making sure the client is happy, will continue to maintain our client base and help growth efforts.

Internally, we operate under this pillar to keep ourselves true and accountable to our teammates. This aligns our culture in the field and in the office: that we do not cut corners. We

do not overlook things. On purpose. Which highlights the most important component of this pillar, which is to own up to your mistake, and make it right.

We aren't perfect. But we can be perfectly imperfect. On an interpersonal communication level, owning up to a mistake and apologizing can be one of the most influential trust-building scenarios to occur. When you are able to take responsibility for a mistake you made to your teammates, they know you have their best interest in mind.

Likewise, when you or your team makes a mistake at a property, notifying the client prior to their being aware of it will only make it easier for you to navigate. If you promote a company culture that owns up to its mistakes and has a process in place for information to flow, you will always be out in front of the client.

Do the right thing always, and when you don't, be sure to own up to it and move forward.



## Certification Corner

by Abby Zuidema,

NHCLP Certification Coordinator

### 2023 NHCLP Exam

The New Hampshire Certified Landscape Professional Exam will be held September 23, 2023. The Plant Identification and Written Portion will be offered on this date. More information on the exam and application can be found on the NHLA website, [nhlaonline.org/how-to-become-certified](http://nhlaonline.org/how-to-become-certified)



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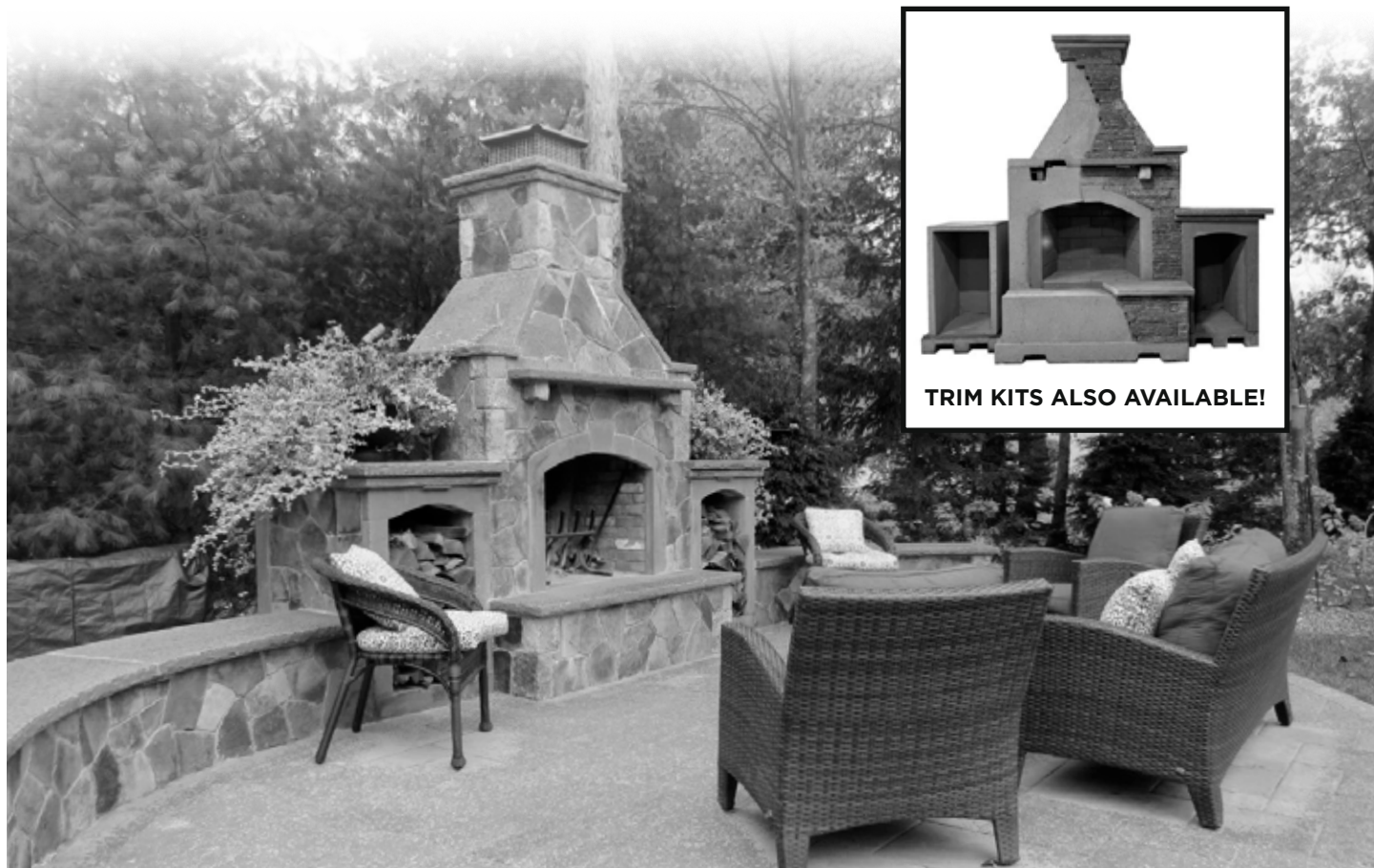


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## Take A Break

by Bill Gardocki

Several years ago I wrote an article about how baseball can be like running a hardscape business. I made several comparisons to commitment, dedication, team camaraderie, and dealing with tough employees. I only wish we made nearly the same amount of money that baseball players make!

Time has rolled around again for another of my annual baseball trips. Each year we go to a different stadium for a series and follow the Red Sox on the trip. This year we are headed to Wrigley Field to see the Sox play the Cubs. We were scheduled to do this trip in 2020 but Covid got in the way. I can't wait to see the second oldest ballpark in Major League Baseball in Wrigley Stadium. Yes, the Wrigley family owned the Cubs and the ballpark many years ago.

In our traveling group we have about 10 of my fellow Rotarians, their adult children, and several people that just want to see a new park every year. This will be our 21st year, and we have been to some great places over the years. It's males only, you must be 21, and yes, there are a few adult beverages consumed.

When I started going on this trip it was not so much to see the other stadiums (that is nice, however) but to get a break from running the business. We need to remember that a mental health break is needed now and then so you don't go crazy. It can be very beneficial to just get away from it all for a few days and not think about anything work related, just fun and games. When I had my hardscape business, we shut down the company for the first week in August every year. My son has continued this tradition with his



Coors Field in Denver, CO, was the site of the 2019 trip.



Tom and Bill Gardocki at 14,000 feet elevation on Pikes Peak, on our 2019 trip.

excavation business. No work is scheduled for that week. Our employees liked knowing they could plan something fun that week and no one had to cover for others being off. Everyone came back refreshed and ready to get back to work.

If a few days or an entire week won't work in your business, consider a non-holiday day off for all. Build camaraderie amongst your employees by planning a day of fun. Take your crew to the Fisher Cats, go cart racing, axe throwing, or a day of golf. The NHLA golf tournament is at the beginning of August. It's a great opportunity to mingle with your peers and have some fun. No matter what you do, it's important to remember to slow down, take a break, and enjoy your family and friends. 🍷



Tom Gardocki and Bob Wilkes at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, OH, while on the baseball trip to see the Guardians in 2017.

— Bill Gardocki is a past president of NHLA (1994). He is now a Hardscape Educator.



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## Preparing Your Clients' Landscapes for the Winter Months

In the fall, professional landscapers need to attend to projects that prepare the landscape for the winter months and promote healthy growth in the following spring. Here are a few recommended tasks:

**Lawn Aeration:** Aerating lawns helps alleviate soil compaction and improves air, water, and nutrient penetration to the grass roots. This enhances root growth and overall lawn health.

**Overseeding:** Fall is an ideal time to overseed the lawn. By spreading grass seed over existing turf, you can fill in bare spots and thicken the lawn, promoting a lush and healthy grass cover.

**Leaf Removal:** As the trees shed their leaves, removing excess tree litter from lawns, gardens,

and pathways may be necessary. Leaf buildup can suffocate the grass and create a breeding ground for diseases.

However, removing every single leaf is not necessary. Some leaves can be beneficial to the ecosystem, providing habitat and food for various wildlife.

Ultimately, the extent of leaf removal will depend on the specific conditions and preferences of the property owner. Finding a balance between removing enough leaves to prevent issues like smothering and disease while also allowing some to remain for ecological benefits is the key.

**Fertilization:** Applying fertilizer in the fall helps nourish the grass and allows it to store essential nutrients for the winter



months.

Natural lawn fertilizers can provide the nutrients needed for a healthy soil. These are some options: grass clippings, alfalfa meal, fish emulsion, seaweed and fish/seaweed fertilizer, bone meal coffee grounds, corn gluten meal, and wood ash from untreated wood. It is essential to apply any of these correctly and in moderation. Follow recommended application rates and scheduling based on the specific needs of your lawns.

**Pruning and Trimming:** Trimming shrubs, hedges, and trees in the fall prepares them for winter dormancy and promotes healthy growth when spring arrives.

**Garden Clean-Up:** Clear out spent annual plants and vegetables from gardens to prevent diseases and pests from overwintering. Consider adding a layer of compost to enrich the soil.

**Mulching:** Applying a layer of organic mulch around trees and shrubs helps retain moisture, insulate plant roots, and protect them during the cold winter months. Consider mulching with leaves.

**Perennial Care:** Cut back dead foliage and stems of perennials, and divide overcrowded plants to promote better growth in the next growing season.

**Planting Bulbs:** Fall is the perfect time to plant spring-blooming bulbs like tulips, daffodils, and crocuses. This ensures a beautiful burst of color once spring arrives.

**Landscape Inspection:** Inspect the landscape for any signs of pest infestations, diseases, or other issues. Addressing problems early on can prevent further damage.

**Irrigation System Maintenance:** Before the freezing temperatures set in, make sure to drain and winterize the irrigation system to prevent damage.

**Hardscape Repairs:** Inspect and repair any damaged hardscape features such as pathways, retaining walls, and fences.

Remember that the exact timing and specific tasks might vary based on the weather conditions and the specific location in which you are working. Don't forget to consider local micro-climates and any unique needs of the landscape you are working on.

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“**B**reathe the sweetness  
that hovers in August.”

—Denise Levertov, British-born  
naturalized American poet (1923-1997)

See the NHLA website for Newsletter copy and advertising deadlines:  
[nhlaonline.org/nhla-newsletter/](http://nhlaonline.org/nhla-newsletter/)



# Calendar

■ **AUGUST 17**

VNLA Summer Meeting & Trade Show, Kingsland Bay State Park, Ferrisburgh, VT, 9 a -5 pm;  
[vnlavt.org/2023-summer-meeting-trade-show-informatin-registration-copy/](http://vnlavt.org/2023-summer-meeting-trade-show-informatin-registration-copy/)

■ **AUGUST 24**

Tree and Shrub ID, Distant Hill, Walpole, see page 7

■ **AUGUST 31**

Deadline for Genest Contractor Photo Contest. Win up to \$2,500 in products. See page 19

■ **SEPTEMBER 20**

NHLA Field Day, Belknap County Fairgrounds, daylong event. See pages 1,4,5.

■ **SEPTEMBER 23**

NHCLP Exam, see page 13