


The Garden Conservancy News

PRESERVING, SHARING, AND CELEBRATING AMERICA'S GARDENS



Garden Conservancy Open Days™
are in Bloom...and return to Alabama! [PAGE 4](#)

**Louise Agee Wrinkle's
Southern Woodland Sanctuary**
Documentary film premieres in Birmingham. [PAGE 6](#)

Frank Lloyd Wright Garden Symposium
His Southern California influence. [PAGE 8](#)

A Note from the President and CEO

As we mark the midpoint of the year and celebrate the pinnacle of our Open Days season. This year, our season kicked off quite early in March with the opening of five private gardens in the desert oasis of Palm Springs, CA.

This began for us what was a very eventful spring. The month of March also saw the kickoff of our National Speaking Tour at the Norton Museum in Palm Beach, FL, which features a presentation by renowned landscape architect Edmund Hollander inspired by his new book, *The Landscape of Home*. In April, we organized the two-day *Frank Lloyd Wright Garden Symposium: His Southern California Work and Legacy* in Los Angeles. This event celebrated the acclaimed architect's design philosophy, emphasizing the harmonious coexistence of buildings and gardens.

We concluded a vibrant spring season with the premiere of our latest film as part of the Suzanne and Frederic Rheinstein Garden Film Documentary Program. *A Garden in Conversation: Louise Agee Wrinkle's Southern Woodland Sanctuary* delves into the captivating narrative of Wrinkle's celebrated garden in Mountain Brook, AL. More than 300 attendees at the Birmingham premiere gave a standing ovation and stayed for the lively discussion panel, book signing, and reception afterward. Notably, this is the first time the Conservancy has interviewed a garden creator for a film documentary. For those who missed the premiere, the film is now available on our website, and I hope that you will watch it.

There is much more ahead this year, including hundreds of Open Days Gardens which will be open for visits, stops in the Midwest and West Coast for our National Speaking Tour, Society of Fellows Garden-Study Tour destinations on the East Coast, and several virtual programs to enjoy.

None of these programs would be possible without our numerous partners and generous supporters. Your contributions are vital to the success of the Garden Conservancy. As we look forward to the rest of the year, we remain grateful for your ongoing enthusiasm as we continue to celebrate and preserve the beauty of gardens across the nation together.

James Brayton Hall
President and CEO



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A panel discussion with James Brayton Hall, Louise Wrinkle, *Veranda* Editor in Chief Steele Marcoux, Cherokee Garden Library Director Staci L. Catron, *Southern Living* Editor-at-Large Steve Bender, and filmmaker Michael Udris. Photo: Beau Gustafson

On the cover: Volunteers Marilyn Dixon and Chollet Still greeting visitors at Louise Wrinkle's garden in Birmingham, AL. Photo: Kim Eriksson



Old Barlow's Carriage House and Garden, Ridgefield, CT. Photo: Julia Kloth

2024 Open Days in Bloom

The 2024 Open Days season has burst into bloom, celebrating not only our strong roots but also producing glorious new offshoots. With over **293 gardens** and **363 Open Days**, 2024 is the largest season in almost a decade, growing nearly 30 percent since last year. Look at how we are not only returning to our roots but also cultivating new blooms across the country to make for a veritable bouquet of Open Days!

While the Open Days program began in the Northeast, among our first offshoots away from the area were the gardens of Chicago. For the 2024 season, we are pleased to present our first Open Day on

the North Shore since 2019 on Saturday, July 27, featuring visiting opportunities to perennial favorites including **Mettawa Manor**, one of the gardens that participated in the very first Chicago Open Day in 1997.

Open Days expanded to the South beginning in 1997, and this year, we are celebrating the return and growth of the program in Maryland, Virginia, and Alabama. New blooms are appearing on Maryland's Western Shore with our first-ever **St. Mary's County Open Day** on June 1, and a mix of perennial favorites and new

faces will be showcased in **Fairfax County, Virginia**, on June 8. 2024 also saw Open Days' glorious re-emergence in Alabama—read more about this landmark weekend on page 6.

Open Days continues to spread across the country with 110 new gardens. Beginning in 2022, we asked Regional Ambassadors—volunteers who help find new gardens and re-engage returning gardens—to help us grow the program. In 2023, this new initiative bore fruit, and these seeds continue to blossom.

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Original Open Days Hosts Presented with Cabot Award

An Open Day is a call to action—if you want to see a garden, you will need to attend the Open Day, as there is no guarantee that a garden will open again the following year, or indeed, ever again. The constantly evolving schedule and annually changing roster of gardens showcased make the gardens that have opened continuously from the beginning in 1995 a rare breed. This season, we are pleased to honor Garden Hosts who have shared their gardens each year since the inception of Open Days with the Anne and Frank Cabot Award. Conferred with heartfelt thanks, this award not only recognizes these gardens' contributions to Open Days but also to the field of American gardening. This spring, we honored the following Garden Hosts with this prestigious award:

Barbara Paul Robinson, Brush Hill, Washington, CT
Bunny Williams, The Garden of Bunny Williams, Falls Village, CT
George Schoellkopf, Hollister House Garden, Washington, CT
Maxine Paetro, Broccoli Hall, Amenia, NY
The Merrin Family, Vivian and Ed Merrin, Cortlandt Manor, NY
Phillis Warden, Garden of Phillis Warden, Bedford, NY

Surrounded by a community of Open Days hosts, honorees met at the Garden Conservancy's offices at Winter Hill in Garrison, NY for a celebration of the community. Hosts' achievements were honored with a beautifully calligraphed certificate of pressed flowers and foliage—an honor as unique as each of the gardens, and one that recipients can proudly display.

Together, this remarkable collection of gardens has contributed over 250 Open Days and provided countless visiting hours for generations of visitors. The Anne and Frank Cabot awardees have inspired not only Open Days visitors, but also the thousands of other Garden Hosts from across the country, to share their gardens and built the foundation of the vibrant Open Days community that continues to grow.



Maxine Paetro, of Broccoli Hall, Amenia, NY, is one of our six Cabot Award recipients.



Left: Conrad Family Garden, Pueblo, CO. Above: Casa de las Ardillas, Palm Springs, CA. Photo: Surfacedesign

Continued from page 3

2023 marked our first Open Day in Colorado since 2018 and 2024 sees the expansion of the program into new areas, including the first-ever Pueblo, CO Open Day on June 8, and a mix of new and returning gardens in Denver in both June and July.

The Open Days department was also keen to extend the Open Days season branching into new seasons; October 19 will mark **San Francisco's East Bay Area's** first-ever autumn Open Day, offering a glimpse into gardens apart from their usual spring Open Day and extending California's Open Days season.

The veritable bouquet that is the 2024 Open Days season is thanks to the many Garden Hosts and Regional Ambassadors from across the country who bring their unique visions and talents to Open Days. From backyard jewel-box gardens to sweeping landscapes, intimate farmettes, and everything in between, Open Days celebrates and shares America's gardens and diverse gardening traditions. As we look toward the future, we are excited to continue to grow our roots but also showcase new blooms from the finest gardens in the country. Interested in growing with us? Reach out to the Open Days department to find out how you can become a part of our Open Days program!

Birmingham Garden Weekend Brings the Conservancy back to the Magic City

Garden enthusiasts in Birmingham, Alabama, were treated to a special weekend in early May, brimming with opportunities to explore the unique private gardens gracing the city and the premiere of a documentary film about the beloved Mountain Brook gardener, Louise Wrinkle, and her famed woodland garden. On Saturday, May 4, the Conservancy hosted its first Open Days after a thirteen-year hiatus, showcasing four exquisite landscapes rarely open to the public.

The centerpiece of the event was Louise Agee Wrinkle's Southern Woodland Sanctuary, a two-acre haven teeming with native plants. Wrinkle, a renowned figure in the gardening world and a Director Emerita of the Garden Conservancy, has cultivated a space that embodies the very essence of conservation and sustainable gardening practices. Visitors were immersed in a serene world where native flora flourished alongside Asian counterparts, creating a tapestry of textures and colors. Family collections of hollies, azaleas, and ranunculus added a touch of personal history to the diverse plantings.

This wasn't the only spectacle on

display. The Open Days program also offered glimpses into three other captivating gardens. The Butrus Garden offered a contrasting experience, transporting visitors to an established Italianate haven. Here, emphasis fell on the calming presence of greenery, water features, and strategically placed stone elements. Sprawling across four acres of mature woodland, the garden boasted a sense of complete tranquility, with each outdoor room seamlessly flowing into the next, offering a refuge of privacy and peace.

The Rooms with Views garden presented a celebration of meticulous design, featuring a series of garden spaces, each a unique perspective on the surrounding landscape. Intricate walls and terraces provided a framework for breathtaking vistas, a testament to the current owners' dedication to creating a timeless masterpiece.

A touch of whimsy graced The Dancer, a garden nestled against the slopes of Red Mountain. Inspired by the homeowner's dream, the space brought together the elegance of a ballerina statue, the tranquility of a water feature, and the classic charm of roses surrounding a 1930s Tudor-style home. The house's architectural lines played a key role in the design, with the garden elements working in harmony to create a captivating scene.

The Birmingham Garden Weekend also celebrated the Conservancy's first film premiere, *A Garden in Conversation: Louise Agee Wrinkle's Southern Woodland Sanctuary*, on May 5 at the Virginia Samford Theatre. The documentary offered in-depth exploration of Wrinkle's garden and design philosophy. The film, part of the Garden Conservancy's Suzanne and Frederic Rheinstein Garden Film Documentary Program, marked a first for the organization—a chance for viewers to not only experience the garden but also hear directly from its visionary creator.

Following the screening, a lively panel discussion delved deeper into the world of Southern gardens, native plants, and conservation practices. Esteemed panelists like Steele Marcoux, Editor-in-Chief of *Veranda*, and Steve Bender, Grumpy Gardener columnist for *Southern Living*, shared their insights alongside Wrinkle herself. The discussion culminated in a book signing for Wrinkle's acclaimed and republished book, *Listen to the Land: Creating a Southern Woodland Garden*.

This event marked a significant milestone for the Conservancy and Birmingham's gardening community. The weekend's festivities not only celebrated the beauty of these hidden gems, but also served as a wellspring of inspiration for garden enthusiasts of all levels.



Clockwise from top: The movie title image; the audience at the Virginia Samford Theatre in Birmingham, AL; Open Days visitors at The Butrus Garden; Louise Wrinkle speaks. Photos: Beau Gustafson



The Garden Conservancy is deeply grateful to Anne Wrinkle, Society of Fellows members Gilbert P. Schafer III and Alan Zeigler, and our Conservancy Board Member Camille Butrus for helping to make this film premiere possible.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR LEAD DONORS

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Thank you to the Virginia Samford Theatre for hosting this event and to the following for their sponsorship of Birmingham Garden Weekend.

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Garden Symposium Looks at Frank Lloyd Wright's California Legacy and Explores His Lesser-Known Work

In April, the Garden Conservancy hosted the two-day Frank Lloyd Wright Garden Symposium: His *Southern California Work and Legacy*, which delved into a lesser known yet impactful period in the architect's career. It offered a unique perspective on the architect's genius, showcasing a design philosophy where buildings and gardens coexist in harmony. The event, held at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre in Los Angeles, attracted 110 attendees.

Frank Lloyd Wright's time as an architect in Los Angeles was brief, lasting only a few years in the early 1920s after he returned from projects in Japan, including the Imperial Hotel. However, this period proved significant, particularly in shaping his approach to landscape design, as evidenced in his work on the Ennis, Storer, and Freeman houses.

Janet Parks, a co-organizer of the symposium and retired curator of the Avery Archives at Columbia University, opened the event by highlighting the enduring role that landscape played throughout Wright's long and prolific career.

Laura J. Martin, a professor of environmental history at Williams College and the author of *Wild by Design* (2022), delivered the keynote address. Her talk placed Wright's interest in gardens, particularly native plants, in context. Martin noted

the influence of Wright's friend, landscape architect Jens Jensen, and shed light on the field's pioneering women scientists, including Elizabeth Britton, Eloise Butler, and Edith Roberts.

The symposium experience extended beyond lectures, as its second day included tours of two Wright-connected Los Angeles gardens: Hollyhock House and the Schindler House, designed by Wright's protégé Rudolph Schindler.

The impact of the automobile on both Los Angeles' development and the rise of wildflower picking as a weekend leisure activity during the early 20th century was also explored.

Striking historical photographs highlighting the city's pre-modern landscape were featured in several presentations, most notably Abbey Chamberlain Brach's talk on Hollyhock House in East Hollywood. Hollyhock House was completed just before Wright moved to Los Angeles and

is regarded as his masterpiece. The house was originally envisioned by its owner, Aline Barnsdall, as a performing arts center with her residence as its centerpiece atop Olive Hill, a 36-acre site. Gardens occupied a special place in its conception, and Barnsdall described it as being planned as "half garden, half house."

Today the Hollyhock House is a house museum and UNESCO World Heritage Site operated by the City of Los Angeles. It underwent a major renovation by its previous director and curator, Jeffrey Herr, and Abbey has focused her attention on the rehabilitation of the landscape with help from Terremoto, a landscape architecture firm in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Jenny Jones, a principal in Terremoto's LA office, spoke next. Though Terremoto is Italian for earthquake, Jenny showed how her team are anything but destructive in their work at Hollyhock or any of the other many mid-twentieth modernist masterpieces they are working on in Southern California. Underlining her work is an infectious curiosity about landscape history and a commitment to using historical records.

Kenneth Breisch pushed the story further in his symposium talk. Ken, an emeritus professor of architecture at the University of Southern California, considered Wright's legacy in the region. Like



Caption for all





Left: Abbey Chamberlain Brach gives her presentation on the Hollyhock House. Right: A panel discussion followed the presentations by our speakers.

a series of concentric circles, the most immediate instances were Wright's son, Lloyd Wright, a gifted landscape architect, and Rudolph Schindler, a Wright protégé, both of whom assisted on the Hollyhock House. Ken's illuminated Wright's impact, for example, on the early work of the leading postmodernist Frank Gehry. From one Frank to the next, Wright emerges as a key to understanding how a considerable number of twentieth- and twenty-first century architects have worked with nature in Southern California.

The last presentation was a short film by Safina Uberoi, a filmmaker, gardener, and owner of a Frank Lloyd Wright-de-

signed House. Safina scaled the discussion to the personal, recounting her journey from a gardener in the Santa Monica Mountains in Los Angeles to the owner of a 1950s Usonian-designed house by Frank Lloyd Wright in Cincinnati, OH, and how one influenced the other.

The symposium experience extended beyond lectures, as its second day included tours of two Wright-connected Los Angeles gardens: Hollyhock House and the Schindler House, designed by Wright's protégé Rudolph Schindler. These tours provided a firsthand look at Wright's enduring influence on Southern California architecture and landscape design, evident even in the work of prominent architects

like Frank Gehry.

Today, the Schindler House is operated by the MAK Center for Art and Architecture, one of several local partners of the Frank Lloyd Wright Garden Symposium. Along with the Hollyhock House, Lotusland, and the Hancock Park Garden Club, our partners helped contribute to the event's success. A special thanks to the Ebell of Los Angeles for providing their beautiful Wilshire Theatre for the presentations on the first day. The Garden Conservancy was also delighted to link arms with the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy, Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, and the Garden Club of America for this event.



Hollyhock House in Los Angeles

Northwest Network Gardens Unite for Advocacy: Protecting Green Oases

Public gardens are vital cultural resources facing threats like climate change and lack of funding. To combat these challenges, the Garden Conservancy Northwest Network (GCNN) held a workshop focused on garden advocacy and civic engagement. Experts shared strategies for building relationships with community leaders and crafting compelling messages to secure funding and influence policy. The workshop underscored the importance of building civic relationships and outreach plans before a crisis occurs.

The GCNN convened at the historic Dunn Gardens in Seattle, designed by the Olmsted Brothers in 1915 as a private estate. Dunn Gardens is a testament to the importance of preserving public green spaces. It showcases two distinct design philosophies: Olmsted's vision for a private estate and the Robinsonian inspired natural woodland cultivated by Edward Dunn. The preservation of this duality provides critical insight into preserving authenticity and design intent over time while providing the community with critical green space and educational opportunities.

It is our civic responsibility to preserve and champion gardens as critical cultural and heritage institutions for future generations. This workshop marks a significant step in the GCNN's mission to advocate for public gardens and the collective is energized to build upon this momentum.



Garden Historian Advolly Richmond Captivates Audience with “A Short History of Flowers” at Atlanta History Center

Renowned garden historian Advolly Richmond enthralled an audience at the Atlanta History Center with a discussion of her captivating book, *A Short History of Flowers*, on the occasion of its publication. The event, held on May 14, was a delightful evening filled with insights into the fascinating world of flowers.

Richmond delved into the surprising histories of 60 beloved blooms, revealing tales of exploration, love, and bravery. From the discovery of the bougainvillea by an 18th-century female botanist in disguise to the enduring magic of the snowdrop, each flower held a unique story. The audience learned about the roles these plants have played in shaping societies, influencing economies, and even inspiring fashion trends.

Richmond, a regular on BBC's “Gardeners’ World,” is a passionate advocate for garden history. The event, presented in partnership with the Garden Conservancy, celebrated the preservation and appreciation of America's diverse gardening traditions.

Those who attended enjoyed a delightful evening surrounded by fellow garden enthusiasts, gaining a deeper appreciation for the beauty and history of the flowers that grace our gardens. Before her lecture, Ms. Richmond visited several outstanding Atlanta gardens, including that of Garden Conservancy Chair Robert Balentine and his wife Betty.



Veranda Magazine Spotlight on Garden Preservation

We are delighted to have been featured in *Veranda's* December 2023 article, "Meet the Creatives Redefining Preservation as We Know It." Noted alongside preservation industry titans like the National Trust for Historic Preservation's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund and the Institute of Classical Architecture and Art, we are honored to be recognized as the "new guard blowing the dust off the long-buried legacies of forgotten architects, gardens, and artists with innovative retellings of stories from the past."

This affirmation underscores the deeper significance of our work — illuminating the natural world's connection to the human spirit. *Veranda* highlighted the Conservancy's Garden Film Documentary program and tangible restoration projects saying, "the Conservancy...bring us not only into gardens but also into conversation with their planners, tenders, and restorers...reminding [us all] what beauty is held in things that grow and how they might and inspire and nurture us all." We look forward with invigoration to furthering our mission of celebrating, preserving, and sharing America's gardens and gardening traditions together.



Renowned Landscape Architect Edmund Hollander Kicks Off National Speaking Tour at the Norton Museum

In March, the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach hosted a special event titled *The Landscape of Home*, featuring acclaimed landscape architect Edmund Hollander. Joined by his colleagues Melissa Reavis and Geoff Valentino, Hollander discussed his new book of the same name, just published by Rizzoli.

The event, held in the museum's Stiller Auditorium, saw Hollander delve into the evolving concept of outdoor spaces as havens of beauty, refuge, and joy. He showcased his design philosophy, emphasizing the importance of creating healthy landscapes that prioritize native plants and environmentally friendly practices. Through a presentation of diverse projects, ranging from sprawling coastal retreats to intimate country estates, Hollander demonstrated how his firm, Hollander Design Landscape Architects, balances aesthetics with environmental responsibility.

Following the presentation, guests enjoyed a wine reception and book signing. Copies of *The Landscape of Home* offered a closer look at Hollander's vision for creating outdoor spaces that not only enhance our lives but also



preserved the natural world. The event was a resounding success, drawing a captivated audience eager to learn from one of the leading figures in landscape architecture.

The Garden Conservancy is organizing more National Speaking Tour events featuring Hollander for the Midwest and West Coast for this fall.



The Garden Conservancy's San Francisco Fall Show to Honor Charlotte Moss, October 18.

Save October 18 on your calendar! The Garden Conservancy will honor award-winning interior designer, speaker, author, and philanthropist Charlotte Moss at its annual luncheon at the San Francisco Fall Show.

The luncheon will be held at the Festival Pavilion of the Fort Mason Center for the Arts & Culture in San Francisco. For advance ticket sales or inquiries on sponsorship opportunities, contact Susan Kenny at skenny@gardenconservancy.org.

Become a Member Today and Be Part of Something Beautiful!

Explore, preserve, and celebrate the artistry of gardens with us. Let's grow together and keep these living treasures thriving for generations to come! One of the most valuable benefits to membership is spending quality time with loved ones in beautiful surroundings while supporting local wildlife, promoting biodiversity and preserving cultural heritage. Gardens all over our country are steeped in history and tradition, maintaining horticultural practices and plant species from bygone eras. And, gardens foster community



connections! Joining our society means connecting with a passionate community, sharing your love for gardening, and participating in exclusive events and workshops.

Membership starts at just \$50, lasts a full year, and is tax-deductible. Your membership not only funds our programs but also connects you to all we do through exclusive member benefits. As part of the Conservancy, you'll receive complimentary credits for Open Days or Virtual Programs, member pricing on events, the Conservancy's publications, and more!

Visit gardenconservancy.org/membership or call 845.424.6500 to join today. If you have any questions reach out to membership@gardenconservancy.org.



Make A Donation!

The Garden Conservancy preserves, shares, and celebrates America's gardens and diverse gardening traditions for the education and inspiration of the public. If you would like to make an online contribution, please scan the QR code left to visit our donation page.