

Hidden Treasures HPS Open Gardens

by Jim Bobb with Penelope Malish

MY GOOD FRIEND PENELOPE RECENTLY MOVED (well, it has actually been a few years now) to Malvern to a dream home—with plenty of area to create the garden spaces she had always talked about. Remarking to me that she did not know many people in the area, I suggested that we explore nearby gardens marked with an asterisk in the HPS Membership Directory.

The process was easy. We looked up her zipcode in the directory and, to our amazement, found seventeen members in the 19355 zip code, six of whom had indicated that they would welcome visits from fellow HPS members. A few phone calls later, and we had dates set with four of them.

Karl Malessa

Our first stop was the garden of Karl Malessa. Karl has been a plant collector for nearly three decades at his current home. His favorites in the collection are the gigantic American holly (*Ilex opaca*) anchoring the corner of his house, a paperbark maple (*Acer griseum*) providing a focal point in the front mixed border, spice bushes (*Lindera glauca* var. *salicifolia*)



The front yard of Karl's garden features a lawn room surrounded by a mixed border featuring *Acer griseum*, *Cornus sericea* 'Silver and Gold', and huge *Fothergilla gardenii*.



Compared to the manicured front of Karl's garden, the back is a woodland, rich with ferns and spice bushes.

sprinkled throughout the woodland garden, and a large bed of dwarf deutzia (*Deutzia gracilis* 'Nikko'). Although taught as a dwarf in garden classes, the 11' x 20' bed contains only three deutzias, which happily spread to fill in the entire area.

Challenges for his area include heavy soil and dry shade. Karl recommends improving the soil with



Carved wood sculptures adorn Bruce's property.

composted organic matter. And, of course, deer are always an issue. To minimize damage to his garden, Karl alternates between Liquid Fence® and Deer Stopper®. The back corner of the area is filled with wire cages that can be placed around plants to keep deer from grazing on them.

Bruce Braverman

Many HPS members may have visited Bruce Braverman's gardens on previous HPS Members' Tours, but this was a first for us. Bruce welcomed us and with a wave of his hand, encouraged us to explore.

On first glance, we saw the garden was populated with carved wooden statues. Although Bruce loves the art, he said that they are not without issues, the gravest being woodpecker damage—which must be repaired almost annually.

In addition to euphorbias, which tend to seed in all the beds, uniting the



Liquidambar styraciflua 'Slender Silhouette' guards the entrance to Bruce's garden.



Bruce points out *Rhus* 'Tiger Eyes' to Jim.



Richard explains the pond installation and reclamation of the forest.



New this year is a beautiful walk featuring natives in Richard's forest. Wish we were here in the spring to see the ephemerals.



A woody plant collection border at Sharon Richardson's garden.

garden beds together, we discovered many PHS Gold Medal Award plants. A beautiful *Rhus typhina*, 'Bailtiger' Tiger Eyes® graces the entry garden and an allee of *Chionanthus virginicus*, just past flowering, provides a background to the beds on the other side of the path. Penelope decided she absolutely **must** have the fastigate *Liquidambar styraciflua* 'Slender Silhouette'.

Richard J. Reynolds

The garden around Richard Reynolds's house hugs a wooded slope near the top of a hill. Mature trees provide a shady area with a few areas of dappled light.

As we circled the house, Richard intended to point out the gardens in the order that he developed them. But of course, our questions led him to give up on that idea and start with the pond, a beautiful focal area just downhill from the house. The pond was 18" to 3' deep in the center, lined with lobelia, hibiscus, and floating hyacinths. After explaining the process he used to develop the pond, Penelope is now reconsidering her design. A pond has been added to her to-do list—especially to keep the bees from falling in her pool and drowning.

As with the previous visited gardens, deer wander through the area. Plants they tend to ignore are leucothoe, pieris, native pachysandra, hellebores, sedges, jacob's ladder, redbuds, calycanthus, and ferns. Ferns are everywhere in his garden—maidenhair, interrupted, royal, Christmas, hay-scented, and bird's-nest ferns.

The shade does keep many weeds at bay, but Richard still has to control the Japanese stilt grass and bittersweet.

Sharon Richardson

Our final stop was to Sharon Richardson's house. Sharon is a very active Master Gardener and participates in many other clubs. Her garden is filled with special surprises that she picked up at those organizations' events and conferences.

Sharon has recently enclosed nearly her entire property with a deer fence and can now populate that area without trepidation. The large windows in the house bring the outside in, and her plan is for bird- and pollinator-attracting container plants to bring the wildlife to her patio. [Look for a feature article from Sharon in an upcoming HPS newsletter.]

Summary

Visiting fellow HPS members' gardens turned out to be so easy and fun that we agreed to do it on a regular basis. As a lagniappe, many of the gardeners offered to pot up some of their favorites for Penelope's garden. Why not take advantage of this great HPS benefit?



Penelope Malish, is an award-winning graphic designer who has created successful branding, identity, and publication design solutions for more than 25 years. Passionate about horticulture, landscape design and beekeeping, Penelope is actively involved with the Barnes Foundation Arboretum and Eastern Apicultural Society. You will soon find her garden listed in the printed HPS directory with an asterisk after her name, where she gardens in circles and spirals with her potter husband Peter and dog Rue.

Ed Note: All photos are ©Penelope Malish.