



THE
POLLY HILL
ARBORETUM



2025 SEASON

Program Guide



The Arboretum grounds are open sunrise to sunset year-round.
The Visitor Center and Plant Sales are open seasonally,
May 24 through October 13, 2025.

Admission is always free for members and children under 12.

For nonmembers, admission is \$10 per person
May 1 through October 31 and \$5 per person November 1 through April 30.

Polly Hill Arboretum, 795 State Road, West Tisbury
pollyhillarboretum.org | 508-693-9426 | info@pollyhillarboretum.org

Above: Homestead Border Front Cover: El Field looking south Back Cover: Homestead Border



A Martha's Vineyard Public Garden: We invite you to come explore and be inspired by the Polly Hill Arboretum

Formally established as a public garden in 1998, the Arboretum is a result of horticultural experimentation and a vision of conservation and preservation. In 1957 renowned horticulturist Polly Hill began a quest to create a garden with year-round interest with plants well-suited for the challenges of the Island's tough climate. After decades of gardening, she realized the time had come to plan for the future of the maturing landscape.

Her research and meticulous record-keeping caught the interest of conservation philanthropist Dr. David H. Smith. A retired medical doctor, he recognized the accomplishments of her research and also saw the importance of preserving the historic farm, stonewalls and surrounding woodlands that otherwise might have been slated for development. He purchased the property, and a series of actions were taken to preserve it in perpetuity as a non-profit botanical institution known as the Polly Hill Arboretum.

Since the Arboretum's incorporation in 1998, Polly's vision has endured, and we remain committed to education, horticultural experimentation, plant conservation, and preserving our historic landscape and buildings. Whether exploring the grounds, taking a tour, or participating in a program, visitors have many opportunities to learn from the Polly Hill Arboretum.

The Arboretum has grown in size, staff, infrastructure and visitation. Public programs are made possible through membership, admission, donations and grants.

WAYS TO SUPPORT PHA:

Membership: Become a supporting member at pollyhillarboretum.org/get-involved/membership/ and receive free admission and discounts on programs and merchandise.

Donate at pollyhillarboretum.org/get-involved/donate/.

Volunteer: All aspects of the Arboretum are supported by volunteers. See page 11. To learn more about volunteering, email info@pollyhillarboretum.org.

TO REGISTER FOR PROGRAMS:

Visit pollyhillarboretum.org/education/calendar/.

Programs may be added throughout the season; please check the website calendar for updates.

The Polly Hill Arboretum acknowledges the Wôpanâak (Wampanoag) people on whose ancestral homeland we gather. Through stewardship, conservation, and education, we honor their culture, creativity, and perspective.



Lecture Series

All lectures are held in the open-air Far Barn unless otherwise noted. It is accessible from the Visitor entrance parking lot. Programs are listed at pollyhillarboretum.org/education/calendar/. Please pre-register for all lectures.

“The Wonderful World of Rhododendrons and Azaleas” and “Tour of the Rhododendrons Collection at the Polly Hill Arboretum” with Thomas Clark

In Collaboration with the Martha's Vineyard Garden Club

The Wonderful World of Rhododendrons and Azaleas

Tuesday, May 13, 12:30-2pm, the Old Mill Building, West Tisbury

The astounding beauty and diversity of rhododendrons available to us present countless opportunities to enhance our gardens. With more than 1,000 species and countless hybrids, they collectively possess showy flowers in a kaleidoscopic range of colors, offer fragrance in many cases, and often present strikingly beautiful foliage. During this presentation at The Old Mill Building in West Tisbury, **Tom Clark** will take a broad look at this diverse genus touching on a bit of botany, conservation concerns, cultivation and care but will focus more heavily on the merits, characteristics and uses of a broad range of rhododendrons and azaleas well-adapted to our climate and growing conditions.

\$10 (Free for PHA & M.V. Garden Club members). Please pre-register.

Tour of the Rhododendron Collection

Sponsored by Dukes Conservation District

Wednesday, May 14, 10-11:30am, the Polly Hill Arboretum

Approximately half of Polly Hill's named plant introductions are rhododendrons and azaleas, so it's no surprise that these shrubs are a prominent feature at the Arboretum. Polly's passion for and experimentation with a wide range of these plants, combined with the favorable growing conditions, were key to rhododendrons becoming the most widely planted group of shrubs here. Join **Tom Clark** as he explores this diverse collection, highlighting great selections for Vineyard gardens and offering tips for success.

Tom Clark is the director and curator of the Mount Holyoke College Botanic Garden in South Hadley, MA, and previously curated living collections at Polly Hill Arboretum from 2006-2016.

\$10 (Free for PHA & M.V. Garden Club members). Please pre-register.



The Future PRFCT: Ground Rules for Gardening in a Changing World with Edwina von Gal

Sponsored by the Betsy and Jesse Fink Family Foundation

Wednesday, June 18, 5-6:30pm

Do you want to do something truly beneficial—for your family, your community, and the environment? It all starts with how you relate to your land. Join Perfect Earth Project's **Edwina von Gal** for an inspiring and practical talk on ecological land care. She'll explore what it means to work with your landscape rather than against it—eliminating toxic chemicals, reducing maintenance stress, and fostering resilience, biodiversity, and beauty. Learn how simple changes can create a healthier, more sustainable outdoor space that supports pollinators, wildlife, your pets, and you. After the talk, Edwina will be joined by local experts for an interactive Q&A and discussion. Bring your questions on topics like toxic-free lawn care, habitat creation, tick and pest management, and cost-saving alternatives to conventional landscaping.

Free. Space is limited, those who are pre-registered will be admitted first. Please pre-register.



Takemmy: Wampanoag Pasts and Futures

Wednesday, June 25, 5:30-6:30pm

West Tisbury and Tisbury were once part of the Wampanoag sachemship known as Takemmy. In this talk, **Brad Lopes** will explore the land's history from the Takemmy perspective. Before and after the arrival of English colonizers, Noepe (Martha's Vineyard) was a target for settlement. With the 'official' arrival of English settlers, the central part of the island faced the same colonial pressures as the mainland. How does this history of settler colonialism connect to today, the environment, and our future? Brad will explore these questions, linking past, present, and future.

Brad Lopes is an Aquinnah Wampanoag citizen and educator with a background in secondary education and museum interpretation. With seven years of experience in classrooms, museums, and communities, Brad approaches education and history through a decolonized, Wampanoag lens. He collaborates with teachers and organizations to focus on Wampanoag culture, including the significance of whales. Brad serves as the Education and Outreach Coordinator for the Aquinnah Cultural Center and Program Manager for the Native American Teacher Retention Initiative at the Mashpee Wampanoag Education Department.

\$15 (\$10 for PHA members). Please pre-register.



ANNUAL LISINA & FRANK W. HOCH MEMORIAL LECTURE

Asylum to Asylum: The Story of the Botanic Garden at Historic Barns Park

Wednesday, July 16, 5:30-6:30pm

Matthew Ross, Executive Director of *the Botanic Garden at Historic Barns Park* will share insight into the role of horticulture in our well-being through the story of "The Northern Michigan Asylum." Over the past ten years, the historic farm has transformed from abandoned buildings and fields of invasive plants into an emerging botanical garden with over 12 feature gardens. The garden is reviving the philosophy that "beauty is therapy" first practiced at the Asylum in the 1880s and has developed therapeutic programs for cancer patients, installed an Anishinabek Medicine Wheel and Foraging Meadow, and a 10,000 brick Labyrinth. He will also discuss how the garden has evolved from a design perspective and highlight particular plants of interest within its living collection.

\$15 (\$10 for PHA members). Please pre-register.



ANNUAL DAVID H. SMITH MEMORIAL LECTURE

Lessons from Stoneleigh: Reimagining Traditional Landscapes with Native Plants with Ethan Kauffman

Sponsored by Dukes Conservation District

Wednesday, August 6, 5:30-6:30pm

With a 150-year history as a private estate, Stoneleigh: *a natural garden* became one of the newest public gardens in the Philadelphia region in 2018. Informed by the growing understanding of the connectedness of all living things, a vision arose during the transition: to reimagine a historical landscape as an ecologically vibrant wonderland of native plants. Relying on both tried-and-true gardening techniques and intrepid experimentation, the emerging garden is an exuberant exploration of cultivating native plants in the modern landscape. Join Stoneleigh Director **Ethan Kauffman** as he reveals the unexpected plants, expressive design philosophy, and unconventional practices that are driving Stoneleigh's exciting transformation.

\$15 (\$10 for PHA members). Please pre-register.



How to Grow: Wisdom for Life from Plants with Garden Marcus

Sponsored by Wilson Associates Foundation with support from the African American Heritage Trail of Martha's Vineyard

Saturday, August 16, 10:30-11:30am

Marcus Bridgewater is an author, speaker, and creator. He is widely known as “Garden Marcus” for connecting his observations in his garden to personal growth and well-being, and he is the author of several books including *How to Grow: Nurture Your Garden*, *Nurture Yourself* (HarperOne, 2022). Marcus has been featured in a variety of press and media including *The New York Times*, *Vogue*, and *The Drew Barrymore Show*. He lives in Texas with his wife, son, and ever-growing garden. Drawing from his own experiences cultivating both plants and mindfulness, Marcus will share how the natural world offers timeless wisdom for resilience, patience, and well-being in this engaging presentation. Whether you are an avid gardener or simply seeking inspiration for personal growth, this talk will provide valuable lessons on how to cultivate a thriving life—both in the garden and beyond.

\$15 (\$10 for PHA members). Please pre-register.

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Oak Origins with Andrew Hipp

Sponsored by Dukes Conservation District

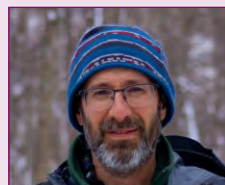
Saturday, September 20, 10am-12pm

How did oaks become such important and beloved trees across the northern hemisphere? What are oak species? What are oak hybrids, and how important are they? How do oaks shape the forest? This lecture, based on Hipp's *Oak Origins: From Acorns to Species and the Tree of Life* (University of Chicago Press, 2024), answers these questions and many more. It touches on the natural history and biology of reproduction in oaks; the origins of oak species and their hybrids; and the estimated 56 million years of oak evolutionary history. The lecture covers research spanning more than a century and illustrates it with trees we all know and love. Following the lecture there will be a tour of the Arboretum's oak collection and herbarium. **Andrew Hipp** is the Director of the Herbarium and Senior Scientist in Plant Systematics at The Morton Arboretum and a Lecturer at University of Chicago. His research group investigates the evolution of plant biodiversity, aiming to understand how the plant Tree of Life evolves and affects our world.

Copies of *Oak Origins: From Acorns to Species and the Tree of Life* will be available for sale.

\$15 (\$10 for PHA members). Please pre-register.

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Native Herbaceous Perennials & Shrubs for the Home Garden

In Collaboration with the Martha's Vineyard Garden Club

Tuesday, October 21, 12:30- 2:30pm, the Old Mill Building, West Tisbury

Martha's Vineyard is home to over 800 native plant species. These species have evolved with our Island ecosystems, are adapted to our unique environment and provide innumerable benefits. Although some of these species are difficult to introduce to home landscapes, there are plenty that are excellent garden plants. In this talk, the Polly Hill Arboretum Curator/ Assistant Director, **Emily Ellingson**, will provide background on the flora of Martha's Vineyard and speak to the benefits of native plants and ecological gardening. She will give examples of great native herbaceous perennials and shrubs for home gardens, including diminutive ground covers, showy wetland plants, anchoring shrubs, and everything in between. Emily will also share resources and tools that will help attendees create their own palette of native plants for their garden.

\$10 (Free for PHA & M.V. Garden Club members). Please pre-register.



Workshops & Classes

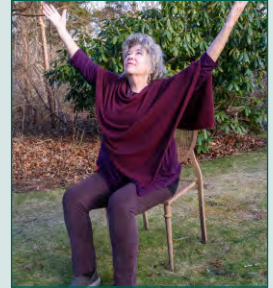
Programs are listed at pollyhillarboretum.org/education/calendar/. Please pre-register.

Balance in Nature

Tuesday mornings, April 15 through October 7, 9-10am

Based on the ancient practice of Chi Kung, *Balance in Nature* is a one-hour session led by **Kanta Lipsky**, designed to use focused, relaxing movements to strengthen your core, calm your mind, and help you ground yourself, making it easier to absorb the beauty of nature. Please meet at the Visitor Center and dress for the weather, as this program is held outdoors.

\$15 (\$10 for PHA members). Please pre-register.



Forest Bathing

Every other Tuesday, March 25 through September 23, 10-11am

Forest Bathing, or Shinrin-Yoku, a Japanese practice of relaxation in nature, has been shown to improve immune response, mental performance, and creativity. Enjoy an easy, mindful walk through beautiful Arboretum trees in a special environment. **Shanta Gabriel** has worked in the field of alternative health for 40 years and has been leading groups in nature since 2012. Please meet at the Visitor Center and dress for the weather, as this program is held outdoors.

\$15 (\$10 for PHA members). Please pre-register.



The Early Azaleas

Wednesday, May 7, 10am-12pm

Come learn about one of Polly's favorite plant groups and see the earliest azalea blooms in a class and tour led by PHA Collections Specialist **Isabella Colucci**. Discover the botanical history of the **Rhododendron** genus and how to distinguish azaleas from rhododendrons. You will also learn how the Polly Hill Arboretum curates, cultivates, preserves, and documents our collection. Additionally, you'll have the opportunity to explore our horticultural member library, which features our extensive collection of rhododendron/azalea books.

\$15 (\$10 for PHA members). Please pre-register.

Make Your Own Herbarium Specimen

Two-part Workshop: Wednesday, May 28 and Wednesday, June 4, 10am-12pm

Join PHA Curator/Assistant Director **Emily Ellingson** for a hands-on journey exploring the science and art of creating herbarium specimens. In addition to managing the living collection, Emily oversees PHA's herbarium, a documented collection of dried plants that are used for scientific study, and are often viewed as works of art. In this two-session workshop, participants will first explore PHA's living collection and learn how to document, collect, press, and dry plant specimens. Participants will return to the Arboretum a week later and learn the art of labeling and gluing their own specimens to archival paper. Participants will take home up to three herbarium specimens. This is a two-part workshop. All materials provided.

\$60 (\$40 for PHA members). Class size is limited to 10. Please pre-register.

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Tick Safety Course

Saturday, May 31, 11am-12pm

Discover how to prevent tick exposure and learn effective strategies to stay safe outdoors. In this class PHA Horticulturalist **Jack Morgan** will guide you through essential tick prevention techniques, including the best clothing and repellents to use, safe tick removal methods, and ways to protect yourself from tick-borne illnesses. He will be joined by **Patrick Roden-Reynolds**, a public health biologist for the Inter-Island Public Health Excellence Collaborative and Director of the Martha's Vineyard Tick Program. Ideal for anyone spending time in nature this summer!

\$15 (\$10 for PHA members). Please pre-register.

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Beech Leaf Disease Update

Saturday, June 14, 10-11:30am

Join PHA Grounds Manager/Arborist **Ian Jochems** and Horticulturist **Jack Morgan**, for an informative walking tour focused on Beech Leaf Disease (BLD) on Martha's Vineyard. The tour will provide an in-depth look at BLD — what it is and how it affects beech trees, along with different treatments and methods that have shown promising results. After a short informational session, participants will be led through the Arboretum to observe the ongoing research and management efforts over the past three years, along with the results seen so far. This tour is designed to equip attendees with the knowledge needed to make informed decisions for their own trees.

\$15 (\$10 for PHA members). Please pre-register.

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Herbaceous/Softwood Cuttings

Saturday, June 21, 10am-12pm

Learn how to propagate herbaceous and softwood plants via summer cuttings with PHA Plant Propagator **Brittany Clark**. Participants will be able to create their own cuttings and learn aftercare techniques. If time allows, the class will end with a tour of PHA's greenhouse to see the summer cuttings propagation equipment.

All tools and materials will be provided.

Class back by popular demand.

\$30 (\$20 for PHA members). Class size is limited to 10.

Please pre-register.



Invasive Plant Identification and Mitigation

Sponsored by Dukes Conservation District

Thursday, August 14, 1-3pm

Join PHA Grounds Manager/Arborist **Ian Jochems** for a hands-on class focused on identifying and mitigating invasive plants. The session will include both classroom instruction and fieldwork, providing participants with the knowledge and skills to address invasive species in their own gardens and yards. Participants will go home with a “buckthorn blaster.”

\$30 (\$20 for PHA members). Please pre-register.



Composting at the Arboretum

Thursday, September 25, 10-11am

Join PHA horticulturist **Jack Morgan** on a guided tour of the composting and mulch operations at the Arboretum. Learn how compost, mulch, and leaf mold are produced and sourced, and how to apply these techniques and processes in your home garden.

\$15 (\$10 for PHA members). Please pre-register.



TO REGISTER FOR PROGRAMS:

Visit pollyhillarboretum.org/education/calendar/.

Programs may be added throughout the season; please check the website calendar for updates.

Tours

Please see specific tour for registration requirements.

Art in the Arboretum

An opening tour with artists and PHA staff is scheduled for June 5, 4:30-6pm

Art in the Arboretum is an exhibit designed to showcase views and interpretations of the Polly Hill Arboretum by 11 artists who are full-time residents, seasonal residents, or regular visitors to the Island. This year's show will feature photographs, sketches, and paintings. The weatherproof replicas, along with information about each artist, will be displayed on the grounds in the location where the original piece was inspired. The exhibit will be on display through October 31, 2025.

Included with \$10 admission (free for PHA members).

Staff Led Summer Botanical Spotlight Tours

Every other Friday, June 13 through September 19, 10-11am

Learn more about the Arboretum and its plant collections on guided walks led by PHA collections staff. These specialized tours are designed to offer an in-depth experience, each focusing on a different aspect of the Arboretum.

Included with \$10 admission (free for PHA members).

Docent Led Arboretum Tours

June through September, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30-10:30am

Learn about the history, people, and plants that make the Polly Hill Arboretum a local and global landmark.

Included with \$10 admission (free for PHA members).



Art in the Arboretum



Summer Botanical Spotlight Tours



Staff Led Autumn Tours

Saturdays, September 27 and October 18, 10-11am

Included with \$10 admission (free for PHA members).

As the busy summer season comes to a close, the Arboretum still offers much to see. Join our staff as they guide you through the changing foliage, autumn blooms, and unique seeds in our collections.

Included with \$10 admission (free for PHA members). Please meet at the Visitor Center.

Family Programs & Activities

Nature Story Time

Presented in partnership with The West Tisbury Free Public Library

**Tuesdays, June 10 and 24,
July 8 and 22, 10:30-11:30am**

Explore the wonders of nature through stories, songs, and hands-on activities at our magical nature-focused story time! Set amidst the beauty of the lush gardens, this outdoor gathering invites children and families to gather in the heart of the Polly Hill Arboretum. Little ones will be enchanted by tales of trees, animals, and the changing seasons. After the reading and songs, we'll take a short stroll or play simple games, sparking curiosity and a love for the natural world. Don't forget to dress for the outdoors and bring a sense of adventure! Ideal for children under 5, but all are welcome.

Free



Family Explorer Backpacks (self-guided)

**Available to borrow in the Visitor Center
May 24 through October 13, 9:30am-4pm**

The Arboretum is the perfect place for families to discover nature together, and our Family Explorer Backpacks will help make this experience more informative and fun. These self-guided educational backpacks, available in the Visitor Center, contain an Arboretum map, field guides, magnifying glasses, sketch pads, and other materials to engage the entire family in nature studies during their visit.

Free on loan during your visit.



Gnome Quest

**Map available at
the Visitor Center,
9:30am-4pm**

Gnomes are hiding in the Polly Hill Arboretum! Follow the clues written by an expert gnome spotter to find 10 gnomes.

Free



Volunteer Opportunities

Grounds Volunteer Open Days

**First Thursday of each month
9am-12pm, May through October**

Curious about becoming a PHA grounds volunteer? Come to a **Volunteer Open Day** to try it out! This opportunity offers an easy-going, fun environment focused on camaraderie and learning about plant care with staff and other volunteers.

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Visitor Center Volunteers

Welcome and educate visitors, sell membership and merchandise. Flexible schedule mid-May to mid-October.

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Youth Education Volunteers

Lead elementary school groups through the Arboretum in the spring and fall.

**For more details or general
volunteer information, email
info@pollyhillarboretum.org.**



Plants for Sale at PHA



Perennials, Shrubs & Trees

Saturday May 24 through Monday October 13 at the Visitor Center

PHA sells plants during Visitor Center hours (9:30am-4pm daily, with exceptions). Choose from plants propagated from the Arboretum grounds, grown from seed collected on expeditions, or selected as Island-appropriate by our staff. We offer a wide variety of unique trees, shrubs, perennials, and Island native species.

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PHA Native Plant Plugs for Sale: Online Only

**Spring: May 30 through July 7,
the last day to pick up is July 11**

**Fall: September 5 through October 6,
the last day to pick up plugs is
October 13**

Want to fill meadow, woodland, or wildflower areas with beautiful native plants? PHA sells Island native plants sold as plugs. Small but strong, these plugs will establish quickly in your garden, providing important food and habitat to pollinators and local fauna. Visit <https://polly-hill-arboretum.square.site/> for more information, and to place your order. Pick up your plugs at the Visitor Center.



2025 Events at a Glance

Please see program details or website for registration and pricing information

RECURRING & SELF GUIDED

Balance in Nature | Kanta Lipski
Tuesdays through October 7, 9-10am

Forest Bathing | Shanta Gabriel
Every other Tuesday, March 25 through
September 23, 10-11am

Gnome Quest (Kids)
Daily, sunrise-sunset

Borrow a Family Explorer Backpacks (Kids)
Daily, May 24 through October 13, 9:30am-4pm

Nature Story Time (Kids)
Tuesdays, June 10 & 24, July 8 & 22,
10:30-11:30am

Staff Led Summer Botanical Spotlight Tours
Every other Friday, June 13 through
September 19, 10-11am

Docent Led Arboretum Tours
Tuesdays & Thursdays, June through
September, 9:30-10:30am

Staff Led Autumn Tours
Saturday, September 27 & Saturday,
October 18, 10-11am

Native Plant Plugs for Sale Online
May 30 through July 7 &
September 5 through October 6

Plants for sale at the Visitor Center
Daily, May 24 through October 13, 9:30am-4pm

Grounds Volunteer Open Days
First Thursday of the month May through October,
9am-12pm

INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMS

**Lecture: The Wonderful World of
Rhododendrons and Azaleas** | Tom Clark
Tuesday, May 13, 12:30-2pm at the
Old Mill Building, West Tisbury

Tour: PHA Rhododendron Collection | Tom Clark
Wednesday, May 14, 10-11:30am

**Workshop (two-part): Make Your
Own Herbarium Specimen** | Emily Ellingson
Wednesday, May 28 & Wednesday, June 4,
10am-12pm

INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMS CONTINUED

Class: Tick Safety
Jack Morgan & Patrick Roden-Reynolds
Saturday, May 31, 11am-12pm

Tour & Reception for Art in the Arboretum
Thursday, June 5, 4:30-6pm

Class: Beech Leaf Disease Update
Ian Jochems & Jack Morgan
Saturday, June 14, 10-11:30am

**Lecture: Ground Rules for Gardening
in a Changing World** | Edwina von Gal
Wednesday, June 18, 5-6:30pm

Class: Herbaceous/Softwood Cuttings
Brittany Clark
Saturday, June 21, 10am-12pm

**Lecture: Takemmy: Wampanoag Past
and Futures** | Brad Lopes
Wednesday, June 25, 5:30-6:30pm

**Lecture: Asylum to Asylum: The Story of the
Botanic Garden at Historic Barns Park**
Matthew Ross
Wednesday, July 16, 5:30-6:30pm

**Lecture: Lessons from Stoneleigh: Reimagining
Traditional Landscapes with Native Plants**
Ethan Kauffman
Wednesday, August 6, 5:30-6:30pm

Class: Invasive Plant Identification & Mitigation
Ian Jochems
Thursday, August 14, 1-3pm

**Lecture: How to Grow: Wisdom for Life from Plants
with Garden Marcus** | Marcus Bridgewater
Saturday, August 16, 10:30-11:30am

Lecture: Oak Origins | Andrew Hipp
Saturday, September 20, 10am-12pm

Class: Composting at the Arboretum | Jack Morgan
Thursday, September 25, 10-11am

**Lecture: Native Herbaceous Perennials & Shrubs
for the Home Garden** | Emily Ellingson
Tuesday, October 21, 12:30-2:30pm at the Old Mill
Building, West Tisbury

Class: Winter Tree Identification
Ian Jochems
Tuesday, November 18, 1-3pm



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**THE
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**A Martha's Vineyard
Public Garden:
We invite you to
come explore and
be inspired!**

