



THE
POLLY HILL
ARBORETUM



2026 SEASON

Program Guide



The Visitor Center and Plant Sale are open from May 23rd through October 12th, 2026.

Admission is free for members and children under 12.

For non-members, admission is \$10 per person (\$5 per person November – April).

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

Cover Photo by Michael Blanchard



Explore and be inspired by the Polly Hill Arboretum! A Martha's Vineyard Public Garden

Formally established 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 and with plants well-suited for the Island's tough climate. After decades of gardening, she realized the time had come to plan for the future of the maturing landscape.

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

Since its incorporation in 1998, the Arboretum's mission has focused on education, plant conservation, and the care and preservation of our historic landscape and buildings. The Arboretum continues to be a horticultural and ecological resource and inspiration today.

Whether exploring the grounds, taking a tour, or participating in a program, visitors always have many opportunities to learn at the Polly Hill Arboretum.

The Arboretum's programs, classes, and events are made possible through membership, admission, donations, and grants. These have allowed the Arboretum to grow in size, staff, infrastructure, and visitation in recent years.

WAYS TO SUPPORT PHA:

Membership: Become a supporting member and receive free admission year-round and discounts on programs and merchandise. Annual Memberships begin at \$50.

Donate: Visit pollyhillarboretum.org to support our work.

Volunteer: Assist with the Visitor Center, in the greenhouse, by giving tours, and more! More information on page 11.

For more information and to register for classes and programs, visit our website at pollyhillarboretum.org, call us at 508-693-9426, or email info@pollyhillarboretum.org.

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



Lecture Series

The Wonderful World of Rhododendrons and Azaleas with Tom Clark

Monday, May 18th | 12:30pm - 2:00pm

PHA and MVGC Members: Free; Non-Members: \$10

In collaboration with the Martha's Vineyard Garden Club, this talk with Tom Clark will take place at the *Wakeman Center in Vineyard Haven*. Attendees will come away with valuable knowledge surrounding the beautiful and diverse (there are over 1,000 species!) rhododendron and azalea plants. The discussion will include conservation concerns, cultivation, and care, with a particular focus on the characteristics that make these plants so well-adapted to our climate and growing conditions.

Tom Clark spent ten years curating living collections at the Polly Hill Arboretum, and is currently the director and curator of the Mount Holyoke College Botanic Garden in South Hadley, MA.



Climate Change, Plant Conservation, and the Future Flora of New England with Jesse Bellemare*

Wednesday, June 17th | 5:30pm - 6:30pm

PHA Members: \$10; Non-Members: \$20

This discussion with Jesse Bellemare will explore the development of the current New England flora following the last Ice Age, and will consider how plant survival through past episodes of major climate change might inform conservation strategies today. Attendees will consider the role humans play in supporting at-risk plant species via approaches like 'assisted migration', and how terms like 'native' and 'non-native' may need to be re-envisioned against a backdrop of shifting distributions and changes in regional flora.

Jesse Bellemare is a plant ecologist and Associate Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Smith College in Northampton, MA.



Keeping Your Eyes to the Ground: Essential Strategies for Dynamic Herbaceous Landscape Design and Establishment with Patrick Cullina*

Wednesday, July 1st | 5:30pm - 6:30pm

PHA Members: \$10; Non-Members: \$20

In this program with Patrick Cullina, attendees will review essential design strategies for successful herbaceous landscapes that yield benefits beyond aesthetics, from managing storm water to supporting pollinators. The lecture will focus on assessment of the ecological regions (including Martha's Vineyard) and their valuable cues, plant selection, integration, spacing, establishment, and more.

Patrick Cullina is an award-winning horticulturist, landscape designer, photographer, lecturer, and planning consultant with more than thirty years of experience in landscape-related fields.



* Sponsored by the Dukes Conservation District

Tick Talk with Jack Morgan and Patrick Roden-Reynolds

Wednesday, July 8th | 5:30pm - 6:30pm

PHA Members: \$10; Non-Members: \$20

During this informative talk with Jack Morgan, attendees will learn how to best prevent tick exposure and will discover effective strategies to stay safe outdoors. Jack and Patrick will guide everyone through essential tick prevention techniques such as choosing the best clothing and repellents, safe tick removal methods, and how to protect yourself from tick-borne illnesses.



Jack Morgan is the Polly Hill Arboretum's Horticulturist, and has been with PHA since 2024. Jack will be joined by Patrick Roden-Reynolds, a public health biologist for the Inter-Island Public Health Excellence Collaborative, and the Director of the Martha's Vineyard Tick Program.

2026 LISINA AND FRANK W. HOCH MEMORIAL LECTURE

The Woody Plant Collections of Arboretum Wespelaar in Belgium with Koen Camelbeke

Thursday, July 23rd | 5:30pm - 6:30pm

PHA Members: \$10; Non-Members: \$20

In this discussion with Dr. Koen Camelbeke, attendees will learn all about the Arboretum Wespelaar in Belgium, which holds a specialized collection of trees and shrubs from around the world. The Arboretum welcomes any woody species; giant and prostrate dwarfs, the common and the rare, the beautiful and the less glorious, and, especially, all those that are threatened in the wild.



Dr. Koen Camelbeke has been the Executive Director of Arboretum Wespelaar since 2002, and is Chairman of the expert committee of the Franklinia Foundation, an organization dedicated to the conservation of threatened tree species worldwide.

2026 DAVID H. SMITH MEMORIAL LECTURE

Faith in a Seed; Growing an Island Arboretum with Tim Boland

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

PHA Members: \$10; Non-Members: \$20

Join retiring Executive Director of the Polly Hill Arboretum, Tim Boland, as he reflects on his 24 year tenure growing both plants and the Arboretum itself. Tim will share memories of Polly Hill and her legacy of horticultural experimentation, which, combined with Tim's own interest in plants and science, shaped his philosophy of enduring steady growth. Tim has been a part of a remarkable period of growth in both PHA programming and campus infrastructure, and his passion and enthusiasm have led to several milestones, which he will share along with his reflections over many years of stewarding PHA.



Tim Boland arrived at PHA in 2002 as the Arboretum's first curator, and has served as Executive Director since 2004.

**All lectures are held in the open-air Far Barn unless otherwise noted.
The Barn is accessible from the Visitor Center parking lot.
Please pre-register online for all lectures.**

Workshops & Classes

Balance in Nature with Kanta Lipsky

Thursdays | 9:30am - 10:30am

PHA Members: \$10; Non-Members: \$15

Based on the ancient practice of Qigong (Chi Kung), this class with Kanta Lipsky is designed to use focused, relaxing movements to strengthen your core, calm your mind, and help you ground yourself. Participants will absorb the beauty of nature, so attendees should dress for the weather. Classes are held every Thursday from April 23rd through September 24th.

Kanta Lipsky is an artist, teacher, and healer, and holds a Master's degree in Expressive Therapy and Holistic Studies from Lesley University.



Annual Woody Plant Pest and Disease Update

with Ian Jochems, Beth Brantley, and Mitch Oswald

Saturday, May 16th | 10:00am – 12:30pm

PHA Members: \$55; Non-Members: \$75

This insightful class will review the latest information on Southern Pine Beetle and Beech Leaf Disease. With Ian Jochems of the Polly Hill Arboretum and Dr. Beth Brantley and Mitch Oswald of Bartlett Tree Experts, participants will learn what options are available to fight against these two pests. A presentation will be followed by a tour of the Arboretum to review the treatments PHA has enacted over the past three years, and how those trees are performing today. This class includes continuing education units for ISA, MCA, and MCLP Applicators.

Ian Jochems is the Polly Hill Arboretum's Director of Grounds and Facilities, and has been with PHA since 2012. Dr. Beth Brantley serves as Plant Pathologist and Mitch Oswald as an Arborist Representative at Bartlett Tree Experts.



Compost 'How-To' for the Home Gardener with Jack Morgan

Saturday, May 30th | 10:00am - 11:00am

PHA Members: \$10; Non-Members: \$20

Join PHA Horticulturist Jack Morgan for this informative composting class. Jack will demonstrate the construction of a compost pile while highlighting one on site at the Arboretum. Participants will learn about ideal compost inputs, proper maintenance, and construction.



Pruning Spring-Blooming Woody Plants with Ian Jochems

Saturday, June 6th | 9:00am - 11:00am
PHA Members: \$20; Non-Members: \$30

In this hands-on experience, PHA Director of Grounds and Facilities Ian Jochems will guide participants through the process of pruning spring-blooming shrubs. The class will cover all essential pruning basics, and will focus particularly on 'old wood' bloomers like lilacs, witch hazels, camellias, rhododendrons, and forsythias. Attendees should be sure to dress for the weather. Tools will be provided by the Arboretum.



Container Gardening with Martha's Vineyard Native Wildtype Plants with Brittany Clark

Saturday, June 13th | 10:00am - 12:00pm
PHA Members: \$40; Non-Members: \$50

Attendees will receive an introduction to container gardening using Martha's Vineyard native wildtype plants in this class with PHA Propagator, Brittany Clark. Brittany will guide the class through the key principles of growing plants in containers including design elements, plant selection, and overwintering care. Each participant will take home the plants they potted during the course!



The Art and Science of Pressing Plants with Emily Ellingson

Saturday, June 27th | 9:00am - 12:00pm
PHA Members: \$30; Non-Members: \$40

This interactive workshop, led by PHA Curator/Assistant Director Emily Ellingson, explores the creation of herbarium specimens. Herbaria are documented collections of dried plants that are used for scientific study, while also viewed as works of art. Participants in this workshop will learn the fascinating history of herbaria, get a behind-the-scenes tour of the Polly Hill Arboretum's own herbarium, and experience the art of labeling and gluing real pressed plants onto archival paper. Attendees will be able to take home some of their work! All materials will be provided by the Arboretum.



How to Hügelkultur with Ian Jochems*

Saturday, July 11th | 10:00am - 12:00pm
PHA Members: \$10; Non-Members: \$15

Hügelkultur is a German word for a technique involving raised or mounded soil beds. In this class with PHA's Director of Grounds and Facilities, attendees will learn how to use this horticultural practice for screening, soil amendment, topography, vegetable gardening, carbon sequestration, and disposal of annual yard waste. After a discussion, participants will walk around the campus grounds to see the Arboretum's own hügelkultur piles, how they are progressing, and the benefits they bring to the Arboretum.



* Sponsored by the Dukes Conservation District

Garden Chair Building

with Dan Benarcik

Saturday, August 1st | 9:00am - 12:00pm

PHA Members: \$350; Non-Members: \$375

In this workshop, participants will learn to build the iconic Wave Hill Chair, designed in 1918 by Dutch architect Gerrit Rietveld. Dan Benarcik will provide step-by-step instruction to attendees, who will leave with their own lovely garden chair. No previous experience is necessary, and lumber will be supplied. Attendees need to bring their own cordless drill.

Dan Benarcik has had one foot in the greenhouse and the other in the wood shop his entire life. Dan is a gardener, designer, woodworker, and ambassador for Chanticleer garden outside Philadelphia.



Guide to Dripline Irrigation with Jack Morgan

Wednesday, August 12th | 10:00am - 11:00am

PHA Members: \$10; Non-Members: \$20

In this informative class, Jack Morgan, PHA Horticulturist, will demonstrate how to install a small dripline system in a woodland garden. The system is ideal for new plantings. Participants will learn how to lay out line, install connectors, and connect to a spigot and timer. Jack will highlight the efficiencies of a dripline compared with traditional sprinkler irrigation.



The Fungal Lens: An Interactive Primer on Nature Writing and Science Communication with Maria Pinto

Wednesday, August 19th | 5:30pm - 7:30pm

PHA Members: \$20; Non-Members: \$30

Aspiring writers and naturalists will enjoy this interactive workshop hosted by author Maria Pinto. Participants will learn how their interactions with the 'more than human' world around them equip them to be effective science communicators and nature writers. Attendees will analyze the work of seasoned writers and do a series of exercises to draw out their own lyrical and scientific encounters with our planet.



Beginner Mushroom Walk with Maria Pinto

Thursday, August 20th | 10:00am - 12:00pm

PHA Members: Free; Non-Members: \$10

Celebrate summer with a mycological foray at the Polly Hill Arboretum! Participants will learn the basics of mushroom identification and how to read the landscape, all while traveling at mushroom speed around the Arboretum! Seekers of all experience levels are welcome.

Maria Pinto is an author and educator living in the Boston area. Maria has led workshops and lectures for mycological societies around the country, and leads regular forays at the Arnold Arboretum in Boston.



TO REGISTER FOR PROGRAMS

Please visit pollyhillarboretum.org or scan the QR code at left. Pre-registration is encouraged for all programs.

New programs and events are added to our calendar throughout the year, please check back often.

Tree Identification in the Modern Era

with Emily Ellingson

Thursday, September 10th | 1:00pm - 3:30pm
PHA Members: \$20; Non-Members \$30

In today's modern era, there are many new tools that can help us identify trees. In this workshop, PHA Curator and Assistant Director Emily Ellingson will walk participants through what to look for when identifying trees, using both traditional and modern methods. Attendees will learn 'tried and true' methods using a flora and dichotomous key, as well as how to ethically and responsibly use tools like iNaturalist, photo searches, and more. Attendees should bring their smart phone or tablet if possible.



Seed Cleaning and Storage Basics

with Brittany Clark

Saturday, September 26th | 2:00pm - 3:30pm
PHA Members: \$20; Non-Members: \$30

Join the Arboretum's Plant Propagator, Brittany Clark, for an introduction to processing wild-collected seed. Participants will learn responsible collecting practices, various seed cleaning methods, commonly used tools and equipment, and how to properly store seed in preparation of spring sowing. Class will feature seeds from species in PHA's Martha's Vineyard Wildtype program, and participants will take home a packet of native seed cleaned during class! All materials are provided.



Tours

Rhododendron Collection Tour

with Tom Clark

Tuesday, May 19th | 10:00am - 12:00pm
PHA Members: Free; Non-Members: \$10

Rhododendrons and Azaleas are a prominent feature at the Polly Hill Arboretum. The Arboretum's namesake, Polly Hill, experimented with a wide range of these plants, and favorable growing conditions allowed the rhododendrons to flourish. Join Tom Clark on a tour of PHA's diverse collection, where he will highlight ideal selections for Martha's Vineyard gardens, and offer insightful tips to participants.

Tom Clark spent ten years curating living collections at Polly Hill Arboretum, and is currently the director and curator of the Mount Holyoke College Botanic Garden in South Hadley, MA.



Hidden Treasures of the Arboretum

with Tim Boland

Saturday, June 20th | 10:00am - 12:00pm
PHA Members: \$20; Non-Members: \$30

The Polly Hill Arboretum is known for its living collections of trees and shrubs, but beyond the beauty of the grounds are special collections used for research. Join PHA Executive Director Tim Boland on a behind-the-scenes tour of this remarkable assemblage of artifacts and ephemera that are sure to surprise and delight. Attendees will gain insight into the herbarium of dried pressed plants, the rare books of the library, the PHA site's history, Polly Hill's personal collections, and more!

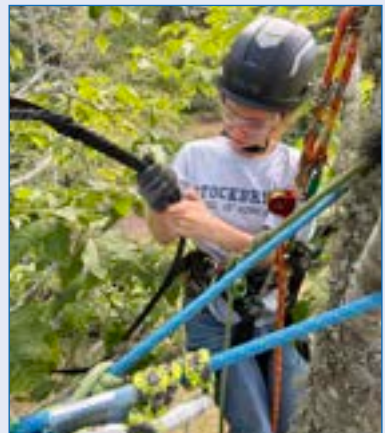


'Ask an Arborist' Tour and Open House

with Polly Hill Staff

Friday, August 7th | 9:00am - 12:00pm
PHA Members: Free; Non-Members:
Included with \$10 Admission

During this special experience, guests can see demonstrations of tree climbing, tree injections, support systems, and other fascinating arboricultural practices. PHA staff will also take the time to answer any questions guests may have about trees or arborists. Guests can feel free to bring pictures of trees at home and PHA staff will offer advice and guidance.



Summer Botanical Spotlight Tours with PHA Staff

Every other Friday | 10:00am - 11:00am
**PHA Members: Free; Non-Members:
Included with \$10 Admission**

Join PHA staff this summer on guided tours through the Arboretum and its extensive plant collection. These specialized tours offer guests an in-depth experience, with each tour focusing on a different aspect of the Arboretum.

Tour Dates: June 12th, June 26th,
July 10th, July 24th, August 7th, August 21st,
September 4th, September 18th



Docent-Led Arboretum Tours with PHA Docents

Tuesdays and Thursdays | 9:30am - 10:30am
PHA Members: Free; Non-Members: Included with \$10 Admission

Learn from PHA Docents about the incredible history, people, and plants that make the Polly Hill Arboretum a local and global landmark. Tours take place every Tuesday and Thursday from June through September.



Autumn Tours with Polly Hill Arboretum Staff

Saturday, September 26th and Saturday, October 24th | 10:00am - 11:00am
PHA Members: Free; Non-Members: Included with \$10 Admission

After the Arboretum's busy summer season, the beautiful fall arrives. Join PHA staff on special tours of the grounds in September and October, where participants will see and learn about the changing foliage, autumn blooms, and unique seeds in PHA's collections.

Children & Family Activities

Nature Story Time with PHA Volunteers

Every Other Tuesday, 10:00am - 11:00am
Free to all

Explore the wonders of nature through stories, songs, and hands-on activities at our magical nature-focused story time! This outdoor experience allows children and families to gather in the lush gardens of the Arboretum. Little ones will be enchanted by tales of trees, animals, and the changing seasons. After the reading and songs, the group will take a short stroll or play simple games, sparking curiosity and a love for the natural world. Attendees should dress for the outdoors and bring a sense of adventure! Ideal for children under 5, but all are welcome.

Story Time Dates: June 9th, June 23rd, July 7th, July 21st, August 4th, August 18th



Family Explorer Backpacks Self-Guided

Every Day, 9:30am – 4:00pm
Free to borrow during your visit

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.



Gnome Quest Self-Guided

Every Day, 9:30am – 4:00pm
Free to enjoy during your visit

Gnomes are hiding in the Polly Hill Arboretum! Guests can borrow a map from the Visitor Center and follow the clues (written by an expert gnome spotter) to find all 10 gnomes. Gnome maps are also available at both the West Field and Picnic Grove entrances.



Volunteer Opportunities

Grounds Volunteer Open Days

**First Thursday of the Month,
May through October, 9:00am-12:00pm**

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

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Visitor Center Volunteering

Flexible Schedule, May through October

In this position, volunteers welcome visitors to the Arboretum, answer questions, and help sell memberships and merchandise.

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Youth Education Volunteer

Varying Schedule, Spring and Fall

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



Perennials, Shrubs, and Trees

Opening Day: Saturday May 23rd | 9:30am - 4:00pm

The Polly Hill Arboretum sells plants during Visitor Center hours (9:30am-4:00pm every day, with occasional exceptions) from May 23rd through mid-October. Guests can choose from plants propagated from the Arboretum grounds, grown from seed collected on expeditions, or selected as Island-appropriate by our staff. PHA offers a wide variety of unique trees, shrubs, perennials, and Island native species.

Native Plant Plugs for Sale: Online Only

Spring: May 29th through July 6th

**Fall: September 4th through
October 5th, the last day to pick up
plugs is October 12th**

Do you 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 pollyhillarboretum.org for more information and to place your order. Pick up your plugs at the Visitor Center.



2026 Program Overview

Please see the program details in this guide or visit our website for registration and pricing information.

LECTURES

The Wonderful World of Rhododendrons and Azaleas | Tom Clark
Monday, May 18th, 12:30pm

Climate Change, Plant Conservation, and the Future Flora of New England | Jesse Bellemare
Wednesday, June 17th, 5:30pm

Essential Strategies for Dynamic Herbaceous Landscape Design and Establishment | Patrick Cullina
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Tree Identification in the Modern Era | Emily Ellingson
Thursday, September 10th, 1:00pm

Seed Cleaning and Storage Basics | Brittany Clark
Saturday, September 26th, 2:00pm

WORKSHOPS AND CLASSES

Balance in Nature | Kanta Lipsky
Thursdays, 9:30am

Annual Woody Plant Pest and Disease Update | Ian Jochems, Beth Brantley, Mitch Oswald
Saturday, May 16th, 10:00am

Compost 'How-To' for the Home Gardener | Jack Morgan
Saturday, May 30th, 10:00am

Pruning Spring-Blooming Woody Plants | Ian Jochems
Saturday, June 6th, 9:00am

Container Gardening with Martha's Vineyard Native Wildtype Plants | Brittany Clark
Saturday, June 13th, 10:00am

SPECIAL TOURS

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Tuesday, May 19th, 10:00am

Hidden Treasures of the Arboretum | Tim Boland
Saturday, June 20th, 10:00am

'Ask an Arborist' Tour and Open House | PHA Staff
Friday, August 7th, 9:00am

ONGOING TOURS

Summer Botanical Spotlight Tours | PHA Staff
Every other Friday, 10:00am

Docent-Led Arboretum Tours | PHA Docents
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30am

Autumn Tours | Polly Hill Staff
Saturday, September 26th and October 24th, 10:00am



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and Be Inspired!**