



# The Hawthorn

Summer 2021



## Order Bulbs Now for Fall Planting

For the second year in a row, Merryspring is holding a Flower Bulb Sale for local gardeners eager to plant bulbs now for next spring. And since last year's offering was a complete sell-out, we have not only brought back many of those favorites but also mixed in a wider selection of daffodils, hybrid lilies, allium, hyacinth, camassia, crocus, and garlic — a total of 54 different types of bulbs to choose among for your garden.

Some of this year's exciting varieties being offered are shown here and on page 7. You can find the complete offering, plus an order form, on our website at [merryspring.org](http://merryspring.org) or by coming to our office at 30 Conway Road in Camden.

Orders must be placed by September 30, but the earlier the better because there's a limited supply of each variety. You can place your order by printing the [Bulb Order Form](#) and mailing (or [emailing](#)) it to Merryspring, or by calling 207-236-2239. All information (height, price per bulb, etc.) is included on the order form.

Merryspring members will receive a 10% discount, and non-members can take advantage of that same discount by becoming members when placing an order. *(Continued on page 7)*

## Remembering Tom Hopps

Merryspring lost a friend, neighbor, nature lover, and staunch supporter on July 5 when Tom Hopps passed away at the age of 91.

"Whenever Tom saw me, he always asked about Merryspring," recalled Ray Andresen, president of Merryspring's Board of Trustees. "He loved the Nature Center and everything we do. He loved the gardens, the programs, the woodlands, and special places like the vernal pool."

Tom was instrumental in preserving and enhancing the vernal pool and nearby Pattison Woodlands. A professional landscape designer for many years, Tom joined the Merryspring Board in 1986 and served as its president from 1989—1991. During that time, he led annual walks through the woodlands, and oversaw construction of Merryspring's Hexagon and installation of the Rose Garden.

Meadowdown, Tom's homestead on John Street, borders Merryspring, so he frequently walked up to the Nature Center to "check things out."

"I met Tom in the mid-80s when he and I were new to the Merryspring Board of Trustees," said Sue Crane. "He had a dignity and self-assurance and the gift of measured speech that was hard not to notice. He was committed to everything that made Merryspring Merryspring. He designed a new logo and coined the phrase: Merryspring—A Way into Nature."

"I knew Tom in other capacities and we became good friends. Over the past few years we made a point to connect either with a visit or by phone every two to three weeks. We shared about the books we were reading or perhaps a movie we'd seen. We'd usually come around to the big questions: What is our purpose here? Where do we go when it's time to leave? Are we being true to ourselves? We never got tired of these discussions, which were punctuated with some good humor. Tom had an attitude of wonderment toward his dying process. There was no room for denial; in fact, in his last year he told me more than once that he often felt gratitude and joy embracing all of this, his final phase of life on earth."

A memorial service for Tom Hopps will be held at Merryspring on Saturday, Oct. 2, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.



Tom at Meadowdown October 2020

## Merryspring Nature Center

P.O. Box 893, Camden, ME 04843  
 Tel: (207) 236-2239  
 Fax: (207) 230-0663  
 Email: [info@merryspring.org](mailto:info@merryspring.org)  
[www.merryspring.org](http://www.merryspring.org)

### Mission Statement

Merryspring’s mission is to practice, teach, and advocate sound principles of ecology, conservation, and horticulture in order to protect our natural environment and to provide natural landscapes and cultivated areas for public enjoyment.

### Hours of Operation

The park is open free of charge from dawn to dusk every day of the year. Our offices and library are open Tuesday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., or by appointment.

### Membership Levels

Individual	\$35—49
Family	\$50—99
Friend	\$100—249
Donor	\$250—499
Steward	\$500—999
Conservator	\$1,000—2,499
Partner	\$2,500—4,999
Patron	\$5,000 or more

### Keeping in Touch

You can sign up for our **eUpdates** at [www.merryspring.org](http://www.merryspring.org) to receive the latest news on programs and events. Or you can visit Merryspring’s Facebook page, where you can check on upcoming events. Please go to [www.tinyurl.com/merryspring-facebook/](http://www.tinyurl.com/merryspring-facebook/).

### Board of Trustees

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Toni Goodridge, Managing Director  
 Brett Willard, Program Director  
 Denise DeSpirito, Garden Manager  
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# Volunteers Help Remediate Invasive Plant Species

Thirteen invasive plant species grow at Merryspring, many of them abundantly. These plants are challenging to eradicate, outcompeting native plants and degrading Merryspring’s natural areas and habitat quality. With the generosity of volunteers, we’re starting to make progress towards managing and eradicating these invasive plants, bringing tangible benefits to the plants and animals that make Merryspring both beautiful and full of biodiversity.

This summer, volunteers are helping to implement Year 2 of Merryspring’s Invasive Plant Species Remediation Plan at weekly volunteer events led by Maine Conservation Corps Environmental Steward Louisa Crane. Volunteers learn to identify invasive plants and then use pruners, loppers, shovels, and other tools to remove invasives growing in the “island” — the wooded area surrounded by our driveway and parking lots.

From plucking countless tiny buckthorn seedlings to battling thorny Japanese barberry plants and removing large honeysuckle shrubs, clearing this area of invasive plants is no small feat. Volunteers have been instrumental in the process. Prior to removal efforts, nine different invasive species comprised around 80% of the understory in this wooded area. So far, volunteers have helped reduce that percentage to almost 0% in about one-quarter of the island area, and we hope to continue that progress throughout the fall.

## September Volunteer Opportunities

We have three remaining volunteer sessions in September, all on Thursdays: Sept, 16, from 2 to 4 p.m., and on Sept. 23 and 30 from 9 to 11 a.m. Anyone interested in helping out should email Louisa Crane ([environmentalsteward@knox-lincoln.org](mailto:environmentalsteward@knox-lincoln.org)) or contact Merryspring at 207-236-2239. Volunteers meet at the Ross Center at the beginning of each session.

Volunteers get the opportunity to:

- learn to identify and manage invasive plants (some of which might grow in your own backyard!).
- feel a sense of accomplishment in helping restore Merryspring’s natural areas & habitat quality.
- get involved in community service, spend time outside doing hands-on work, and meet new friends or old acquaintances.



Louisa Crane teaches volunteers how to identify and pull invasive plants.

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## Membership Update and Benefits

Even with 50 new memberships so far this year, we still have not recovered our pre-covid numbers of 2019. So please renew your membership or become a new member by clicking the “[Donate Securely](#)” button on the home page of our website [here](#), or by calling 207-236-2239.

Membership benefits include:

- Free admission to Tuesday Talks
- Discounts on other classes and workshops
- 10% discount on most Plant Sale and Gift Shop purchases
- The Hawthorn newsletter
- Lending library privileges
- Reciprocal benefits at over 345 [American Horticultural Society gardens](#) nationwide

## How to Leave a Lasting Legacy at Merryspring

Merryspring has a permanent Endowment Fund to ensure that future generations will continue to enjoy the wonders of nature being exhibited and taught at your Nature Center. If you would like to make a bequest that will increase this fund, please consult your financial and legal advisors on what method would be in your best interest and would fulfill your wishes. For more information, please call (207) 236-2239 or email [info@merryspring.org](mailto:info@merryspring.org).



*Environmental Steward, Louisa Crane*

## Meet Environmental Steward Louisa Crane

There are plenty of new faces at Merryspring this year. With a garden internship program, an assistant summer gardener, and some first-time volunteers, many new people have been lending their time and talents to the Nature Center. One person visitors and members may have met is our AmeriCorps Environmental Steward, Louisa Crane.

Louisa is serving with the Maine Conservation Corps. MCC and Merryspring have had a long-standing partnership, with MCC work crews contributing to the construction of many park infrastructure projects like the timber stairway, rehabilitation of the Kitty Todd Arboretum, and bog bridging on the Perimeter Trail. Many of Merryspring's past Environmental Educators were also MCC service members.

Louisa's primary responsibility here is to organize volunteers and remove invasive plant species, following the Invasive Plant Species Remediation Plan drawn by the Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District (KLSWCD) in 2019. Before joining MCC, Louisa worked at Wellesley College with the Paulson Ecology of Place Initiative engaging undergraduate students with nature and a sense of place through academics, research, environmental monitoring, citizen science, recreation, events, internship opportunities, and other programming.



*Above and below: before and after shots of an area cleared of invasive plants by volunteers.*



Louisa is splitting her service term between Merryspring and KLSWCD, where she is monitoring, mapping, and helping KLSWCD develop and execute invasive plant species remediation plans around the midcoast. At Merryspring she is organizing weekly volunteer days, pulling 13 different species of invasive plants, and educating our guests about the problems invasive plants pose to native habitats and ecosystems.

We asked Louisa a few questions about her experiences so our members may get to know a little more about her.

### *1. What drew you to AmeriCorps and to work at Merryspring/KLSWCD?*

After spending 6 years in the Greater Boston area for college and my post-baccalaureate fellowship at Wellesley, I felt ready to return to Maine and give back to the state and community I grew up in. I was interested in getting more hands-on experience in the field of conservation and particularly working hands-on with plants and habitat restoration. I am super happy to be gaining experience in conducting field surveys, creating maps, and writing management reports with Knox-Lincoln, while also gaining technical skills in invasive plant removal and volunteer coordination experience at Merryspring.

### *2. What have you learned so far?*

Through this position, I've come to truly grasp the extent to which human activities have impacted and altered ecosystems around us. The sheer prevalence of invasive plants in the midcoast area and at Merryspring is striking evidence of the human-inflicted damage to natural habitats and ecosystem function in our own backyards. Despite this gloomy reality and the threat that invasive plants pose to native habitats, applying knowledge and concepts to real-life management issues has been very rewarding and has shown me first-hand how humans can steward our environments and be active caretakers of the Earth.

### *3. Where would you like to take your career after AmeriCorps?*

I want to continue to explore the field of natural resource management and in particular focus on plant ecology and habitat restoration. I want to become more well-versed in native plant identification and understand more deeply native habitats and ecological communities. I'm also interested in working with volunteers and creating programming around environmental stewardship.

### *4. What are some of your interests outside of work?*

Outside of work I enjoy swimming in and relaxing by the ocean (you can spot me at the ledges on Beauchamp Point Road several times a week), baking muffins and other baked goods, and exploring hiking trails around the midcoast and especially in the Camden Hills. I am also taking advantage of being home by spending lots of quality time with friends and family in the area—and probably telling them much more about plants than they would like to know.

### *5. Do you have any favorite spots at Merryspring?*

I love spending time in the herb garden observing all the diverse plants that Denise has curated and cared for. I also enjoy walking through the Cedar Forest on the Green Trail.

# Summer Programming a Safe Success

By Brett Willard

While nobody expected how much the pandemic would affect all of our lives, certainly few could have predicted that the second pandemic summer would see Merryspring Nature Center busier than ever. Coming off a robust online-only schedule in late May, Merryspring has seen full rosters in most of its programs since then.

Tuesday Talks have been held mostly outdoors all summer, with some online Zoom programs entering the schedule in August. The outdoor talks have regularly had full attendance, with many old friends and lots of new faces visiting for the first time. All of the outdoor weekend workshops held this spring and summer, on subjects such as seed starting, transplanting, and mushroom identification, have had full rosters. Demand has been greater than ever for low-cost kids' programs, and as such, Free Family Fridays have been more popular than ever—with all of the 8 one-hour programs full to capacity for activities like birdwatching, tree identification, and "wildlife detectives." Meanwhile, our Explorer Kits program with Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District was expanded this summer from 20 weekly kits last year to 30 in 2021. Demand met supply as each week saw all of the free take-home kits claimed by local and visiting families, providing hands-on science activities like solar printing, cloud diaries, and build-a-bug.



*Transplanting Workshop is a springtime favorite.*



*Phoebe and Maron Alexander examine owl pellets.*

Of course, the summer season was not without some concessions. Our popular Summer Ecology Camps were canceled for the second year in a row out of a concern for safety of all students and staff, as well as our annual Fairy Festival, which typically brings over 200 children, families, and fairies to Merryspring each year. Most notably, the annual Kitchen Tour, Merryspring's biggest fundraiser and a beloved community event, had to be canceled for the second year in a row.



*John Fromer's Perennial Gardening Series is always well attended.*

## Two New Fundraisers

To augment the losses of the Kitchen Tour, two fundraisers were added to the Merryspring calendar in 2021. The first was the Merryspring Garden Bench sale, which not only raised funds but provided community members and the Nature Center with new, high-quality cedar garden benches. Secondly, the Fall Flower Bulb Sale, which was an unexpected success in 2020 (we ran out of bulbs!), is returning this season, with orders for an ever wider variety of autumn-planted bulbs being taken now until September 30.

While the weather has been challenging this year, with more than a handful of programs being rained out, the warm temperatures and abundant rain have rewarded the gardens with a bountiful bloom. The perennial borders are eye-popping, the Children's Garden and accessible raised beds are full of vegetables and cut-flowers, and the restored Herb Garden is boasting a wide variety of useful plants buzzing with bees, beneficial wasps, and other pollinators. In the woods, mushrooms have fruited early and in great number, with some edible species popping up in new places all over the park.

## Fall Programming Plans

Going into autumn, we are continuing to take caution with our programs and events. As caseloads continue to rise, Merryspring will still hold Tuesday Talks outdoors, with a few online lectures in the schedule offered for free via Zoom. Another seasonal family ecology walk, this one for fall foliage, will take place in October, as well as an outdoor Forest Therapy workshop, an oft-requested program. See the fall event schedule in this newsletter for more information. And of course, we invite one and all to come to Merryspring to walk the trails to see late-season blooming wildflowers, see the gardens as they show off their fall colors, and watch the leaves change in the coming weeks.

# 2021 Fall Events Calendar

## Tuesday Talks

Sponsored by:  **First**  
National Bank

\* Denotes online talk via the Zoom platform - please email [info@merryspring.org](mailto:info@merryspring.org) to request a Zoom link to attend. All other talks will be held at Merryspring Nature Center and are free for Merryspring members; \$5 for non-members.

### SEPTEMBER

**September 7\*** The Arctic, Maine, and the First Abrupt Climate Change in the Modern Era

with Paul Mayewski

**September 14** Dividing Perennials in the Late Season

with John Fromer

**September 21\*** Herbs for the Chef's Garden

with Denise DeSpirito

**September 28\*** Trends in Ecology and Conservation Over Eight Decades

with Caitlin McDonough MacKenzie

### OCTOBER

**October 5** Preparing the Perennial Garden for Winter

with John Fromer

## 2021 Conservation Tour of Knox and Lincoln Counties

**September 9** This year's tour puts the spotlight on one nature center and three farms. Participants will see conservation practices in action, learn about mitigation of invasive plant species, experience working farms, and enjoy local agricultural products. The self-guided tour allows for flexibility in scheduling your visits of **Merryspring Nature Center in Camden, Herbal Revolution in Union, and Wanderwood in Nobleboro.**

For more information, visit <https://www.knox-lincoln.org/conservation-tour>.

## Worm Bin Harvest and Workshop

**September 16** with Jock Robie from 6:00—8:00 p.m. Free to all. Mainly Worm Bins founder Jock Robie leads this hands-on program of how to use earthworms to odorlessly turn kitchen waste into useful soil amendments. Those who wish to receive a free worm bin must pre-register.



## Free Family Program

**October 2** Fall Foliage Family Walk with Brett Willard from 10:00—11:00 a.m. Learn why and how leaves change color on this family-friendly program heading into peak autumn foliage. Space is limited. Pre-registration required. Free to all.

## Weekend Workshop

**October 16** Forest Therapy Workshop with Lora Laffan from 10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m. \$7 for members/ \$12 for non-members. Slow down and experience a series of gentle, guided invitations to open the senses and invite interactions with the natural world. This workshop guides guests through the art of "forest therapy," and concludes with a tea ceremony from locally foraged plants. Space is limited. Pre-registration required.



# Garden Interns Made a Difference



Garden Assistant Rachel Michaud pulling weeds in the Hosta Garden.

This year three interns — Jasmine Bouchard, Lillian Dailey, and Karolyn Buck—joined us in the Merry-spring gardens one day each week over the course of six weeks at the beginning of the season. They participated in all of the early season gardening tasks from prepping beds to planting. We even used a permaculture technique to build a “hugelkultur” garden bed, which is now covered in flowers at the back of the garden. Each week we talked about different themes that would come up, like how to treat invasive weeds, best practices for planting, and so much more.

After the six-week internship, Rachel Michaud came aboard as additional garden staff, helping to weed and tend to our flowers. There is always much to do in our gardens, and having extra hands to help get it done is wonderful.



Garden interns busy weeding the Rose Garden.



The dye garden is one of many themed areas of Merry-spring’s Herb Garden.

# Herb Garden Undergoing Changes

*By Denise DeSpirito*

The Herb Garden at Merry-spring was of particular interest to me when I started here as the gardener six years ago. The oldest of Merry-spring’s cultivated gardens, the Herb Garden has changed since the original design was made — trees have grown larger, bringing more shade; aggressive weeds like jewelweed and goutweed have shown up; and different plants are now more popular. Over these past six years, I have worked to amend the soil, edit out plants that had taken over, moved things around, and started new plants from seed.

At first, I focused on what was the "Medicinal" plant bed in the original design. When I started at Merry-spring, this bed was almost entirely Heliopsis, but now it boasts of more than 30 types of perennial medicinal plants. I have tried doing bits and pieces here and there in other beds, and at the end of last season focused on removing the apple mint that had taken over the "Dye" garden bed and replaced it with actual dye plants like Madder, Indigo, and Weld this season. We have also added some plant labels in this garden to help people identify commonly used medicinal plants they may want to learn more about.

The Herb Garden is ever-evolving and, while it has shifted from the original planting plan, it is now coming back to contain more medicinal plants and other plants in line with the original bed themes. Still, there is more that can and will be done.

## Original Herb Garden Design

Merry-spring’s fragrant and visual Herb Garden, established in 1984, was shaped as two fish chasing each other’s tails, the garden’s eight interlocking sections each included a different type of herb—medicinal, decorative, culinary, gray-and-silver, and even a section for those featured in Shakespeare’s writing.



*Below are more examples of beautiful flower bulbs being offered in this year's Merryspring sale.*



Narcissus Peach Cobbler

*Narcissus Peach Cobbler*



Lilium Claude Shride

*Lilium Claude Shride*



Crocus Romance

*Crocus Romance*



Hyacinthus Gipsy Queen

*Hyacinth Gipsy Queen*



Daffodil Acropolis



Narcissus Congress

*Narcissus Congress*



Galanthus nivalis Hippolyta

*Galanthus nivalis Hippolyta*



Camassia blue melody



Amaryllis Evergreen

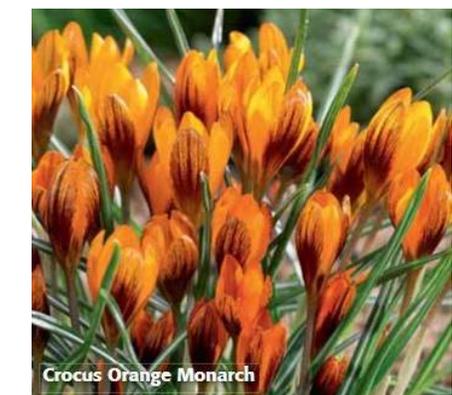


*Hyacinth china pink*

***Bulb Sale (continued from page 1)***

Your order will be prepared and ready for pick-up at Merryspring Nature Center, 30 Conway Road in Camden, from late September through early October during regular office hours: Tuesday – Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Orders cannot be shipped.

All proceeds benefit Merryspring Nature Center.



Crocus Orange Monarch

*Crocus Orange Monarch*



P.O. Box 893  
Camden, ME 04843



## Reserve Merryspring for Your Event

Remember to think of Merryspring when you or your friends are planning a wedding, memorial service, meeting, or other special event. Each year several weddings, receptions, and meetings take place at Merryspring. Conveniently located yet away from the noise and bustle of the towns of Camden and Rockport, Merryspring offers stunning gardens and an outdoor hexagon perfect for small ceremonies. A well-tended lawn bordered by flower beds filled with spectacular color from June through September will accommodate a tent for up to 200 guests. And the meeting room inside the Ross Center is spacious and airy.

