

Newsday

# Llife

SPRING  
GARDENING  
ISSUE



The Knot is among the features of the property.

MATTITUCK COUPLE OPENS OASIS TO THE PUBLIC **E2**

# A garden **for the** people

act**2** | Vaccinations help give a shot of normalcy **E21**

RANDEE DADDONA

N1

## In this issue

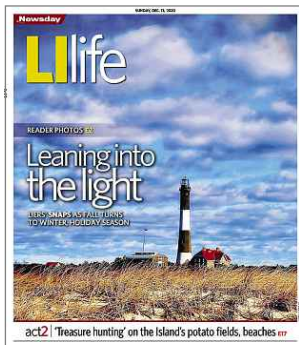
E2 Today's Spring Gardening Issue shares the story of a new public garden on Long Island.

LI LIFE NI

In Act 2, meet Long Islanders who are embarking on a new normal after getting their COVID-19 vaccines. Today's Faith calendar lists in-person and virtual events, and the Senior calendar continues to offer virtual events.

This issue does not include the regular exploreLI Top 10 and Community Calendar; the Veterans calendar; or the Town Agenda and Police Beat.

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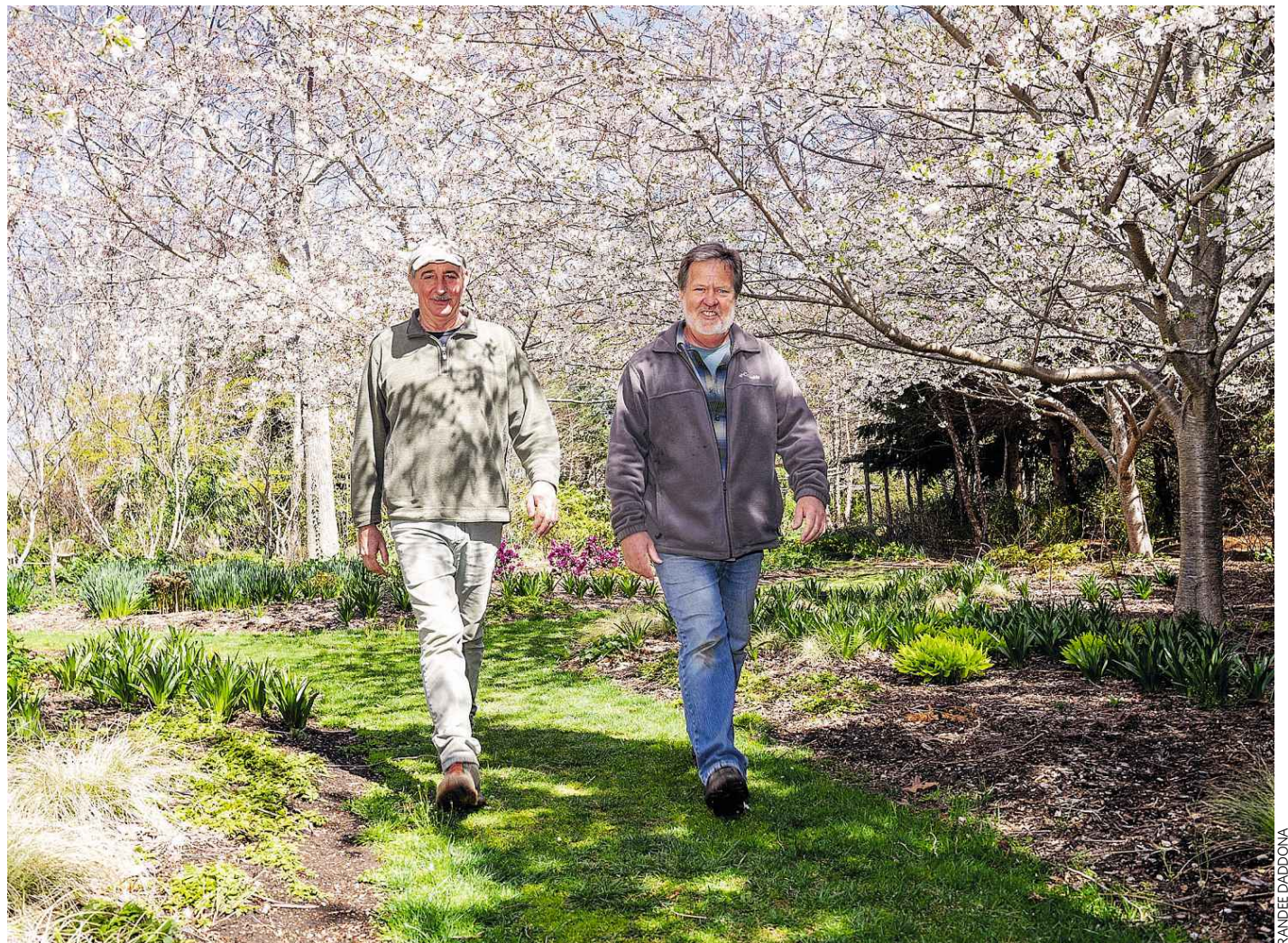
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# Sharing a horticultural DREAM

A couple starts a **nonprofit** to open up their **sprawling garden** to the public

BY JESSICA DAMIANO  
Special to Newsday

When Dennis Schrader steps out his front door, he said, he enjoys gazing at the two majestic oaks he and his husband, Bill Smith, planted nearly 30 years ago. Off to the right, a large lawn is surrounded by perennial borders abundantly planted with white bearded irises, roses and grasses — and punctuated by a pond that looks like it has been there forever.



Dennis Schrader, left, and his partner, Bill Smith, moved to their Mattituck property in 1992 — and started planting.



DENNIS SCHRADER

**Containers on the porch and around the house, at left, hold unusual tropicals, ferns and perennials that change with the seasons. Among the plants: wisteria (on the arbor), foxglove, willow branches, Spanish lavender and viola. Above, a colorful spark of rhododendron.**



RANDEE DADDOONA

## PLAN YOUR VISIT

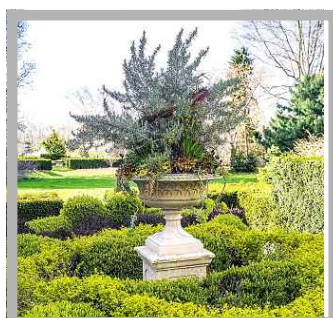
Landcraft Garden Foundation will hold its "soft opening" on May 7 and operate from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays through October. Tickets for two-hour timed entry slots must be purchased in advance online at [landcraftgardenfoundation.org](http://landcraftgardenfoundation.org) (go to the drop-down menu for "Visit," then click on "General Info"). Admission is \$15 for adults; \$12 for students and seniors; \$5 for children under 12; free for children under 2; and free for members.

commercial greenhouses were surrounded by 4 acres of beautiful gardens, and word got out. "In a typical year, we would have 2,000 to 3,000 visitors from garden clubs, societies and schools," Schrader said. "We did no publicity at all. It was just word-of-mouth."

### JOY IN SHARING

Schrader and Smith found they enjoyed sharing the beauty of their garden so they joined The Garden Conservancy's Open Days program, opening their property for public tours one day a year during which "a couple hundred" people typically would stroll the garden in search of inspiration, Schrader said. "Gradually, we started thinking about [making the garden more accessible to the public], and about three years ago began exploring what we needed to do."

Setting up their nonprofit, Landcraft Garden Foundation, took two years; then there was the process of assembling a board of directors and an advisory board, which includes such gardening luminaries as Martha Stewart, award-winning British horticulturist Fergus Garrett and Dan Hinkley, author and co-founder of Heronswood Nursery in Washington, among others. And



**ON THE COVER.** The Knot features an urn with rosemary, spring flowers and woven multicolored shrubbery.

In 1992, when the couple first moved to the 1840s farmhouse they bought on leased land in Mattituck, in the heart of the North Fork wine region, one of the first things they did was plant those irises, which had traveled with them from their former garden in Baldwin. The plants' ancestors had been in Smith's family for years. Joining the irises in the garden's rich soil is a 120-year-old pussy willow, which had belonged to Schrader's grandfather and has moved over the years from Brooklyn to Bald-

win and Huntington before settling in to its new scenic home, nestled between the Long Island Sound, Mattituck Creek and the Peconic Bay.

"At the time, we thought that would be the size of the entire garden," Schrader said of the 1-acre plot, designed by Smith, that surrounds their home. But as the years went by, the couple bought adjacent lots, including an overgrown, abandoned farm covered in poison ivy, invasive plants and roses. And with each purchase, their garden grew — one acre at a

time.

"After clearing the farm's green space," Schrader recalled, "we moved into each area, putting in a pond, then a stream and a meadow and a woodland," all the while running Landcraft Environments, a wholesale tropical plants nursery, from the property.

"We had all these great plants we were collecting, so we had to keep making the garden bigger," said Schrader, who, along with Smith, has a horticulture and design background. Before long, their

See COVER STORY on E4



Lucy Cutler, a trustee for the Landcraft Garden Foundation, sits on the garden atop the ruin, crafted from architectural salvage. "It's like a vaccine to the soul," Cutler says of the Mattituck garden.

RANDEE DADDONA

# A garden

COVER STORY from E2

then the COVID-19 pandemic hit, postponing Landcraft's planned spring 2020 opening by a year.

Today, the foundation, with Schrader and Smith as president and vice president, respectively, is dedicated to the preservation of Landcraft Gardens. The couple will retain lifetime tenancy of their home and property, which will gradually pass to the foundation through their estate so that the public can enjoy the grounds' sweeping vistas and extraordinary gardens forever. Currently, five caretakers work at Landcraft, tasked with planting and maintaining the gardens on a daily basis.

"We are really all very lucky with what they are giving to the community," said Lucy Cutler, former director of philanthropy for The Nature

Conservancy and New York Botanical Garden and a trustee of the Landcraft Garden Foundation. "As far as I know, there isn't another garden of this stature, design, diversity that's open to the public [on Long Island]," she said, adding, "I feel like I'm transported when I go there. I could be in an English garden or a tropical oasis or on the North Fork with the native plants. There really is something for every visitor."

Long Island hasn't seen a new public garden open since 2008, when the secluded 5-acre Bridge Gardens opened in Bridgehampton. So the conversion of Schrader's and Smith's personal garden into a public garden is regionally significant. With something for everyone, from homeowners seeking inspiration for their own gar-

See COVER STORY on E6



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# that grows care



RANDEE DRADDONA

Wooden chairs, which were handmade by Dennis Schrader, have been placed under the rondels, circular supports upon which climbing roses and exotic vines grow.

## PUBLIC GARDENS IN BLOOM

Masks and social distancing are required; visit websites or call to confirm before visiting.

**BAILEY ARBORETUM**, 194 Bayville Rd., Lattingtown, 516-801-1458, baileyarboretum.org (\$5 per car; \$2 per person for walk-ins; buildings remain closed; portable restroom available).

**BAYARD CUTTING ARBORETUM**, 440 Montauk Hwy. (Route 27A), Great River, 631-581-1002, bayardcuttingarboretum.com (\$8 per car, seniors 62+ park free; manor house remains closed).

**BRIDGE GARDENS**, 36 Mitchell Lane, Bridgehampton, 631-283-3195; peconiclandtrust.org/bridge\_gardens (free).

**CLARK BOTANIC GARDEN**, 193 I.U. Willets Rd., Albertson, 516-869-7637, clarkbotanic.org or northhempsteadny.gov (free admission; Clark House remains closed, restrooms and gift shop are open).

**HOFSTRA ARBORETUM**, 129 Hofstra University, Hempstead, 516-463-6623, hofstra.edu/

community/arbor (free). **LIU POST COMMUNITY ARBORETUM**, 720 Northern Blvd., Brookville, 516-299-3500, liu.edu/arboretum (free). **LONGHOUSE RESERVE**, 133 Hands Creek Rd., East Hampton, 631-329-3568, longhouse.org (\$15 adults, \$10 seniors, free for members, children, students, veterans and active-duty military). **MADOO CONSERVANCY**, 618 Sagg Main St., Sagaponack, 631-537-8200, madoo.org (currently free; by appointment only). **OLD WESTBURY GARDENS**, 71 Old Westbury Rd., Old Westbury, 516-333-0048, oldwestburygardens.org (\$14 adults, \$12 seniors and students, \$8 children 7-17, free for 6 and younger; timed entry reservations must be made online). **PLANTING FIELDS ARBORETUM STATE HISTORIC PARK**, 1395 Planting Fields Rd., Oyster Bay, 516-922-9200, plantingfields.org (\$8 per car; tours \$10 adults, \$9 seniors, \$5 youths 11-17, free for 10 and younger).

LILIFE N1

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newsday.com NEWSDAY, SUNDAY, MAY 2, 2021

# A green space built for

## COVER STORY from E4

dens to day-trippers and families wanting to bask in nature, Landcraft Garden Foundation is “a real jaw-droppingly beautiful gift to the community,” Cutler said.

“Our main goal is for the garden to live beyond us,” Schrader said, “and we just really want to see it prosper and see horticulture and gardening prosper in the future and let others enjoy the gardens, too.”

### CREATING A ‘REFUGE’

At the end of the newly constructed long gravel driveway off Grand Avenue, visitors come face-to-face with an eye-catching entrance pavilion and overhead structure, both of which have been treated in the Japanese technique of *shou sugi ban*, in which wood is burned until charred, then protected with natural oil. Inside, a gift and garden shop will open to a pollinator path, which in turn leads to the rondels — three circular supports made from locust wood harvested from the property upon which climbing roses and exotic vines grow.

Next comes Schrader’s favorite — the ruin — a subterranean stone grotto he built from collected architectural salvage. And at the back of the property, a linden allee offers a shady path for a stroll. “Allee” is the French word for “alley,” which is derived from the Latin “venire,” which means “to come.” The planting style is distinguished by two rows (sometimes, double rows) of identical trees flanking a path that beckons visitors “to come” to the other end.

The meadow garden is a feast for the senses, its fluffy, swaying grasses interplanted with perennials to create a spectacular vision of color and texture. Closer to the residence, the knot garden weaves shrubbery of yellow, green, burgundy and red in a knotted-rope pattern, and window boxes and hundreds of containers on the porch and around the house hold



Perennials line the linden allee, a planting style distinguished by two rows of identical trees flanking a path that beckons visitors to the end.



An eye-catching entrance pavilion and adjoining overhead structure have been treated in the Japanese technique of *shou sugi ban*.



Japanese iris is among the perennials that grow in the meadow, one of the features created by Dennis Schrader and Bill Smith.

# the ages



Succulents grow in the greenhouse of Landcraft Environments, a wholesale tropical plants nursery on the Mattituck property.

RANDEE DADDONA



A Weeping Katsura tree sits between the pollinator path and the meadow, flanked by Mexican feather grass, Verbascum and salvia.

DENNIS SCHRADER

## INSPIRATIONAL GARDEN TOURS

It's time once again for The Garden Conservancy's annual Open Days. The program, which began in 1995, affords gardeners, day-trippers and curiosity-seekers access to some of America's most beautiful private gardens.

This year, six Long Island Open Days were scheduled at press time — four in Suffolk and two in Nassau — that will be held rain or shine. Each self-guided garden tour incurs an entry fee, typically \$10 (children under 12 are admitted free), with proceeds benefiting the conservancy's mission to preserve gardens across the country.

To ensure safety-capacity limits, online preregistration and payment will be required this year. Visit [gardenconservancy.org/open-days](http://gardenconservancy.org/open-days) to purchase tickets and to check individual tours for hours and information.

Because of the pandemic, participating gardens are subject to change; please check the website for updates. Exact locations will be provided to registrants before the tour.

Here is a sampling of the 2021 Open Days tours on Long Island.

### JUNE 6

#### The Barnyard, Oyster Bay

Featuring a channeled woodland stream that flows over two waterfalls into an old foundation reservoir, the garden blends formal and naturalized styles on its many terraced levels. Plantings include native as well as rare specimens, evergreens and grasses.

#### Rancho, Glen Cove

Stroll among the sunken, stone-walled, raised-bed vegetable garden, formal boxwood-framed rose garden, perennial borders and an Asian-influenced stone koi pond on the property of an 1892 historic Gold Cost home.

#### Kippen Hill, Glen Cove

A rare plant collection awaits visitors in this 12-year-old garden that comprises five separate spaces: a variegated garden, an English-style formal garden with a water feature, an Asian garden with an aviary pagoda (and Asian egg-laying hens), a vegetable garden and paisley-patterned papyrus beds. A 1925 Lorn and Burnham greenhouse is home to a collection of tropicals — and doubles as a dining area.

### JUNE 12

#### Glade Garden, East Hampton

Ornamental trees, shrubs and shade perennials (including unusual specimens) populate this



A sign labels Landcraft's participation in the Open Days program.

RANDEE DADDONA

plant collector's garden, which has been designed with year-round interest in mind. A plant sale of cuttings from the owner's garden will be held on the property during the tour, with proceeds benefiting the Garden Conservancy.

#### Marsh House, East Hampton

Following the principles of Two Thirds for the Birds (234birds.org), this garden, created by an environmentalist landscape designer, supports wildlife with native plants and avoidance of chemicals.

### JUNE 26

#### The Gardens at Sands Light, Port Washington

On the waterfront estate of a former Vanderbilt mansion and 19th-century lighthouse and cottage, this garden boasts a scenic view, water features, sculpture, woodland garden and a rare plants collection. Visitors can gain inspiration from the more-than-100 planted containers, perennial borders, a cactus garden, private beach and formal knot garden, and visit with peacocks, koi and tortoises.

### JULY 10

#### The Landcraft Garden Foundation, Mattituck

This repeat Open Days participant returns to the tour for the first time as a public garden and will hold a plant sale throughout the day.

#### Winds Way Farm, Jamesport

Once a potato field and pasture, this North Fork garden includes a small orchard with heirloom apples and espaliered fruit trees, herbaceous and shrub pollinator borders and a large vegetable garden, all designed to complement the 1836 Greek Revival-style whaling captain's house, 1872 one-room schoolhouse and early-19th-century barn on the property.

### JULY 31

#### The Mary Kay and John Brennan Garden, East Hampton

Designed and planted specifically to avoid deer visits from a nearby nature preserve, this fenced-in garden incorporates lush plantings of Russian sage, butterfly bush, hydrangeas, chasteberry, viburnums, peonies, catmints, daisies and a 7-foot-tall black-eyed Susans.

#### Pomeroy, East Hampton

Garden sculptures punctuate this formal garden, which includes peonies, zinnias and a serpentine perennial bed. In front, a row of ginkgo trees stands tall, and large evergreen *Cryptomeria* and Leyland cypress border the rear.

#### Furthermoor, East Hampton

A long perennial bed filled with colorful hollyhocks, day lilies, daisies and Russian sage complements the spectacular view of the ocean, a pond and green fairways from this South Fork garden.

### AUG. 14

#### Yugen, Sag Harbor

Acres of deep emerald green moss, ancient Asian plantings and a Japanese stroll garden complete with sculpture will transport visitors from the Hamptons to another time and place. A Japanese bridge, Chinese pond, Himalayan birch grove, sand dunes and a waterfall contribute to *yugen* — the Japanese term that describes a sense of the mysterious beauty of the universe for which this property is named.

#### Round House Gardens, East Hampton

Mass plantings throughout this "multiroom" 10-acre property include fern leaf beach, copper beach, monkey puzzle, columnar maple, umbrella pine and other trees, including one of the first *Chinese Metasequoia* propagated at the Arnold Arboretum at Harvard University in 1949.

— JESSICA DAMIANO

# Building a garden for all

COVER STORY from E6

unusual tropicals, ferns and perennials that change with the seasons.

Visitors can meander through winding paths that pass a large grove of *Musa basjoo* — the hardy banana with 6-foot leaves — and explore other tropical and subtropical plants along the way. There is a tiki hut, too, that will be filled with a collection of exotic plants, and there are plans to build a labyrinth later this year.

Four of the property's 14 acres have been designed into garden spaces. The remaining 10 acres encircling them are "wild native plant gardens with mowed walking trails through them" and serve as a habitat for birds, insects and such wildlife as box turtles, rabbits, foxes and woodchucks, Schrader said.

Landcraft Garden also plans to offer yoga classes and workshops for adults and children on topics ranging from canning food to painting.

From a private garden that "started out simply to have something beautiful" for themselves, Schrader said he and Smith wanted "to create a little refuge [for people] to get away from it all and a laboratory for learning." The sentiment is echoed in the Landcraft Garden Foundation's mission statement: "Ultimately our intention is to provide the experience of joy that gardens bring to people throughout the world."

"The garden lifts your spir-



The pollinator path begins just beyond the entrance pavilion and has a view of the rondels, made of locust wood harvested on the property.

its. It feeds your mind. It calms your soul," said Cutler, the trustee. "This garden opening now is the perfect place to go as we come out of this COVID hibernation. It's like a vaccine to the soul."

## LANDCRAFT WORKSHOPS

In keeping with Dennis Schrader's and Bill Smith's desire to create a "laboratory for learning," Landcraft Garden Foundation will offer adult and children's workshops throughout the season. Check landcraftgardenfoundation.org for registration information (additional fees apply). These workshops are planned for 2021:

### FOR ADULTS

Botanical drawing  
Food preservation  
Yoga/guided meditation  
Meadow walk

Beekeeping  
Succulent pizzas  
Repotting/mounting orchids  
Hypertufa planters  
Topiaries  
Plant propagation

### FOR CHILDREN

Introduction to gardening  
Introduction to meadows and the natural environment  
Scavenger hunt (plant ID)  
Storytime (garden subjects)  
Fairy tea party  
Build your own nest  
Vegetable gardening

— JESSICA DAMIANO



A map of the Landcraft Gardens, which include designed spaces encircled by 10 acres of what Dennis Schrader describes as "wild native plant gardens with mowed walking trails through them" that serve as a habitat for birds, insects and such wildlife as box turtles, rabbits, foxes and woodchucks.

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