Christopher Barrett Sheridan
The Flower Sommelier

Specialist in Scent and Color. Proponent of Wild and Romantic gardens. Advocate for Heirloom Plants.





For more information: explore www.flowersommelier.com or email christopher.barrett.sheridan@gmail.com

2025 venues included: West Virginia Nursery and Landscaping Association, Philadelphia Flower Show (floral design demonstration), International Master Gardener Conference (two presentations), Talbot County Garden Club

DISTINCTIVE AND ENGAGING PROGRAMMING

Embracing the Spirit of the Night: Vespertine Gardens (2025)

Victorian Pot et Fleur (2026)

Iconic Flower Designs of Yesterday and Tomorrow (Philadelphia Flower Show 2025)

Designing with Scents: Benefits of Incorporating Fragrance in Sustainable Meadows & Woodland Gardens (Native Plants) (GardenCOMM 2024)

Sharing Space: Layered Bulb Containers (Longwood Gardens 2024, 2025)

Capture the Spirit of the Garden with "Scentsational" Arrangements (Philadelphia Flower Show 2024)

Timeless Tussie-Mussie Workshop (Longwood Gardens 2024, 2025)

Communicating the Ephemeral: An Experience in the Vocabulary of Fragrance (GardenCOMM 2023)

Let's talk about timeless gardens and well-loved plants, including:

Arts and Crafts Design
Cottage Gardens
Early American Gardens
French Potager
Heirloom Flowers
Impressionist Landscapes
Historic Floral Design Genres
Pleasure Gardens
Rural Cemeteries
Spring Ephemerals
Vespertine Gardens
Walled Gardens

The Flower Sommelier Design Philosophy: While biodiversity and sustainability are core values, gardens should also be compelling and distinctive, with plant palettes reflecting their locality and the creativity of their designer. The places listed on the left resonate because of their abundance of color, fragrance, texture, movement, and ephemeral nature. These genres and spaces have endured for generations because they respond to our fundamental need to connect with nature and at least occasionally immerse ourselves in beauty and serenity.

What about Formal Gardens? These magnificent spaces deserve great respect, but they can sometimes be hard to love, unless they are supported by abundant and naturalistic plantings. For example, carpet bedding is painfully static, but with the right plant palette, its cousin, the "Paisley Garden" evolves beautifully for months, serving a wide range of pollinators and wildlife. In general, hardscape should be the frame and not the picture. Arts and Crafts gardens may be the perfect balance of formal and informal, but harmony can also be achieved in most horticultural genres.



Our Three-Part Approach to Garden Education: Slides, Steps, and Stems
(we have combined all three in one day, and we can also add a wine tasting)

Presentations: Chris lectures at the Philadelphia Flower Show, GardenCOMM conferences, and is an instructor at Longwood Gardens. He recently gave his first presentation at a statewide symposium for landscape professionals and is looking forward to speaking at an international conference later this year. Chris welcomes programming inquiries from public gardens, garden clubs, plant societies, museums/historic sites, and other horticultural enthusiasts.

Garden Tours: While teaching at Longwood Gardens and historic Laurel Hill Cemetery, Chris has led tours of a range of gardens and meadows. Living plants speak well for themselves and when feasible, he loves to include a walking tour in his classes. Savoring the scent and colors of individual species or cultivars is delightful and helps participants understand the cultural needs of plants they may be considering for their own garden.

Floral Arranging: Chris is an accidental florist! While teaching the Language of Flowers at a historic garden, he realized that Tussie-Mussies (Victorian posies) are a wonderful educational tool. These small, inexpensive bouquets provide an intimate flower arranging experience for all ages. Chris now also teaches bulb lasagna, container gardens, and floating arrangements. Garden design is still his passion, but small bouquets and hands-on flower arranging are here to stay.

"Scent is the soul of the garden."
"Biodiversity equals resilience."
"Heirlooms represent our heritage."

Brief Biography: Chris is an award-winning civic educator, pursuing a second career in horticulture. He specializes in fragrant flowers, aromatic foliage, Cottage Garden design, Arts and Crafts design, the Language of Flowers, garden history, and heirloom plants.

Because of his emphasis on scented plants and experience in the wine industry, Chris decided to call his website "The Flower Sommelier." It's not meant to be stuffy or judgmental, but to remind everyone that flowers are best appreciated up close, with eyes, hands, and nose. This is why he especially enjoys leading garden tours and developing "make and take" classes.

Chris has been published in American Gardener and is frequently interviewed by fellow garden writers when their subject includes scented plants or sensory gardens. He enjoys being a guest on radio and podcasts,

Chris is a Harrison Fellow of the Historic Landscape Institute and has a Certificate in Ornamental Horticulture from Longwood Gardens. He holds degrees from Villanova University (B.A. in Literature and M.A. in Political Science/International Relations) and Tulane Law School (J.D., and Certificate in Environmental Law).

Chris is an active member of the American Public Garden Association, GardenCOMM, Digging In Association (container garden professionals), the Garden Conservancy, the American Horticultural Society, the Southern Garden History Society, and the Hardy Plant Society.

Note: Every program is refreshed since it was last offered and the plant palette refined to resonate with each audience.



July 2025 – October 2026 Highlights (completed and scheduled programs as of 10/30/26)

New Venues/Partners:

American Horticultural Society – AHS Live

Annapolis Horticulture Society

Capitol Hill Garden Club and National Capitol Area Virtual Garden Club

Connecticut Flower and Garden Show

Greater Rochester Perennial Society and Master Gardeners of Monroe County New York

Hardy Plant Society - Mid-Atlantic

Lake County Master Gardeners, Indiana

Northwest Louisiana Master Gardeners' Speaker Inaugural Fall Luncheon (and workshop)

Texas Master Gardener 2026 Conference (two workshops)

Villanova University

New Programs:

Virtual: 1) Tussie Mussie Work Along, 2) Floating Flower Bowls Work Along (shopping list is provided to participants)

Lectures: Early American Garden Design (Philadelphia Flower Show)

Lecture/Workshops: 1) Early American Containers, 2) Blue Garden Containers, 3) Art in Bloom (Rousseau, Pot et Fleur), 4) Species Bulb Lasagna, 5) Graduation Posy Workshop

Longwood Gardens Bus Tours: 1) Philadelphia Founding-Era Garden Tour (Five Colonial/Federal Era Philadelphia Gardens), 2) Historic Cemetery Garden Design (in development)

Recent Garden Travel:

Andalusia Garden Symposium

Buffalo Garden Fling (NY)

Digging In Association Summer Meeting (Boston)(also visited gardens in Connecticut, Western Mass, and the Hudson Valley).

Virginia Historic Garden Week (Charlottesville, Fredericksburg)

Williamsburg Garden Symposium

Media Coverage:

Meet the Flower Sommelier Who Wants You to Stop and Smell the Roses, Better Homes & Gardens, Erica Browne Grivas (Digital, October 27, 2026)

Floral Sommeliers: Cultivating a New Way to Savor Flowers, Garden Club of America Bulletin, Jennifer Lagor (Anniversary Issue, Summer 2026)

Also an assortment of local news coverage of programs offered with Garden Clubs and Master Gardener Organizations.