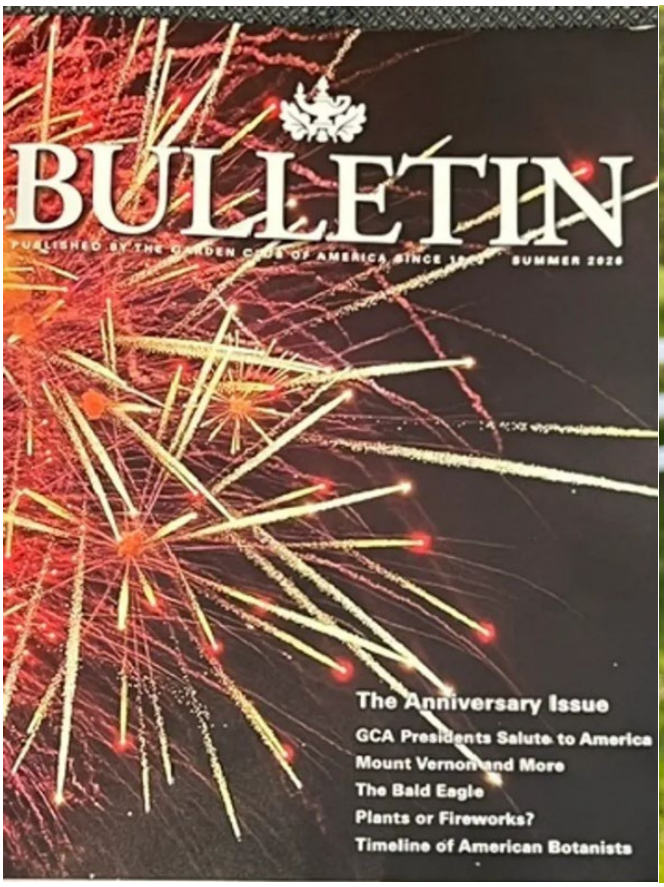




Handheld garden tasting – floral sommelier Christopher Barrett Sheridan holds a freshly gathered nosegay. Photo by Christopher Barrett Sheridan

Floral Sommeliers: Cultivating a New Way to Savor Flowers

Across gardens and gatherings, a quiet shift is underway: the rise of the floral sommelier. Borrowed from the world of wine, the term reflects an evolving way of engaging with flowers-one that combines botanical knowledge, sensory observation, and interpretive skill to help others experience blooms with greater intention.

A floral sommelier begins with botanical literacy. Each plant carries its own history-how it grows, where it thrives, and what seasonal rhythms shape its character. By interpreting these details, a sommelier helps gardeners and floral arrangers select flowers that not only complement one another visually but also contribute to a shared ecological narrative.

Equally important is the sensory dimension. Gardeners are encouraged to consider fragrance as they might a wine's bouquet: the green sharpness of early narcissus, the honeyed depth of mock orange, or the bright citrus notes of marigold. Texture becomes an additional point of study – silky petals, sturdy stems, and airy umbels each offer a distinct sensory impression.

Ultimately floral sommeliers invite us to slow our pace and look more closely. Their work serves as a reminder that flowers are more than decorative elements: they are expressions of place and season. By engaging with blooms through sight, scent, and story, gardeners deepen their appreciation for the natural world and cultivate a more mindful, observant practice. -Jennifer Lagor, Adirondack GC, Zone III

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