

## GCA SHIRLEY MENEICE HORTICULTURE CONFERENCE

Chicago/Lake Forest - Monday, September 16 & Tuesday, September 17, 2024

**MONDAY** held at the Chicago Botanic Garden with approximately 200 attendees:

The welcome was provided by Fern Allison, Chair Shirley Meneice Horticulture Conference 2024, and GCA President Marily Donahue. The announced 2025 conference will be virtual and 2026 to be held in Pasadena, CA. Both days there was a “seed share.” Dozens of packets selected for SGGC.

Fred Spicer, Executive VP and Director of Chicago Botanic Garden spoke about what it takes to be a premier botanic garden. Carrie Waterman, GCA Horticulture Chair then spoke about GCA initiatives. “Plant, propagate, grow and show.” Content on GCA website.

With respect to the FREEMAN MEDAL please **see proposal instructions on the GCA website**. Unusual or underutilized. Must be able to propagate throughout the US etc. A lot of excitement about the award announcement is to follow.

Prior to lunch at a pavilion at the Chicago Botanic Gardens we held Zone Breakout sessions for an hour to update on horticulture activities of our various clubs. I participated in Zone VI.

For the next issue of the “REAL DIRT” please submit “red photos” for fall/winter issue.

The afternoon was action packed with four tours followed by dinner and a speaker at Exmoor Club.

1. Elawa Farm in Lake Forest. A 1917 historic farm originally the ground of Elsa and A. Walston Armour. Cow adapting the property with the Elawa Foundation created in 2002 to be a sustainable farm, educational and culinary center, and market.
2. Three private gardens on Green Bay Road in Lake Forest, IL. One home overlooks 35-acre Haffner Meadow placed in trust through the Lake Forest Open Land Association. The meadow has been restored over time to its long-standing primeval prairie state.
3. Gardens at 900 N. Waukegan Road, Lake Forest, IL. Abandoned buildings adjacent to Elawa Farms from 1917 were acquired by Craig Bergmann and Paul Klug. Used as both private residence and design offices. Gardens are an example of how quickly a landscape can be transformed with a focused collaborative vision. Designated a State of Illinois historic landmark.
4. Jean and John Greene Nature Preserve, N. Sheriden Road, Lake Forest, IL. Three distinct ravines and trails with all year-round access to Lake Michigan. One hundred steps down to the lake! Rare boreal micro-environment.

**TUESDAY** reconvened at the Chicago Botanic Garden to announce the FREEMAN MEDAL award. *Quercus montana*. Chestnut Oak/Basket Oak/Mountain Oak. Nominated by a GCA club in VA.

Lydia Scott, Director of Chicago Region Tree Initiative discussed adding trees to our urban landscapes. The afternoon was self-selected three classes/workshops/tours held at the Chicago Botanic Gardens. Followed by dinner at the Skokie Country Club. The dinner speaker was Ernest C. Wong, Landscape Architect who designed the River Walk downtown Chicago. Excellent speaker!