The Pruyn House, located in the Town of Colonie, was built in 1830 by Casparus Pruyn. The original 182 acres were owned by Patroon Stephen Van Rensselaer III, known as the last patroon. Casparus Pruyn was employed as a financial manager for Patroon Van Rensselaer and acquired the lands in 1839 after the death of Van Rensselaer. Constructed in “high style”, a combination of Federal and Greek Revival styles, the house was used for many years as a summer residence for the Pruyn family. Following Pruyn family ownership the house passed through several other owners, and was eventually abandoned. The house and the surrounding 5 1/2 acres were purchased by the Town of Colonie in 1982; it has been restored and is now on the National and New York State Historic Registries. Now the Pruyn House is jointly owned by the Town of Colonie and the Friends of Pruyn House, a non-profit organization formed to manage the site. It is used for many cultural and social events including a full schedule of summer weddings.

Along with the original residence, outbuildings on the property include the original carriage house; the Buhrmaster Barn built along the Mohawk River in 1850 and moved to the site in 1987; the Verdoy one-room schoolhouse, built in 1910 and moved to the site in 1996; a smokehouse, toolshed, well house, outhouse, and a potting shed. A greenhouse which was originally part of the property is unfortunately no longer on site. When the property was owned by Mr. Sid Bailey, Superintendent of Albany City Gardens in the 1960’s and 1970’s, seedlings were grown in the greenhouse for the Executive Mansion.
The gardens on the property have evolved over the years as well. The original Herb Garden was developed in 1987 by the Blue Creek Garden Club with the help of Mr. John Faddegon who designed the space. It consists of 25 beds with gravel and brick walkways surrounding a center circular bed with a sundial. The original plantings included herbs for dye, fragrance, medicinal and culinary purposes. In 2009, the Fort Orange Garden Club (FOGC) was asked to assume responsibility for the Herb Garden. It currently has approximately 55 different plants including natives and many that were used by colonial housewives for various purposes as well as many ornamentals. FOGC has added signage to help visitors identify plants and their uses. Schenectady County Master Gardeners recently had the opportunity to tour the gardens and the home.

In 1988 FOGC designed and added a Cutting Garden to provide flower arrangements for various rooms of the house. The original Cutting Garden had 14 rectangular beds containing 58 perennials and 21 annuals, including 40 rose bushes and a center arch for climbing plants. In 2009, FOGC added a Monarch Way Station garden to the property.

The gardens are maintained today by the Fort Orange Garden Club who gather every Monday morning to plant, weed and mulch. The gardens have served as an educational project for the club as well as a great source of camaraderie as they work together in the soil. The gardens are a lovely addition to the Pruyn House property and have added much enjoyment for those who attend weddings, concerts, history lectures, plant sales, art exhibits and Old-Fashioned Sunday events.

Text courtesy of the Fort Orange Garden Club. Photos by Angela Tompkins

Yikes! What’s Eating My Plant?

We recently had a sample of this modest beetle come into our office. Found in a backyard, it was feared it might be ready to harm some new plantings. Just the opposite is true: this is the goldenrod soldier beetle (Chauliognathus pensylvanicus), a beneficial species. In the larval stage, these little guys and gals can be found feeding on aphids, while the adult form prefers nectar and pollen, making them important pollinators. They are most prevalent in late summer. This is another example of how it pays environmental dividends to identify before taking action!
High summer. The living is easy but the plant ID is not. Yellow flowers are a-bloom hither and yon, and while certainly pretty, their look-alike faces are a nuisance to identify. They’re all composites, having tiny disk flowers of green, yellow, brown or black surrounded by long, narrow ray flowers of several degrees of yellow. To most of the world, these are just yellow daisies, but gardeners need to pin down the genus and species to feel satisfied. When taxonomic efforts fail, we just call them “DYCs,” or “damned yellow composites,” and walk away in a funk of gnats, sweat and tears. Here are a few that I’ve gotten to know enough to name.

Some of the easiest DYCs to sort out are those named for the Swedish father and son team of Olof Rudbeck the Elder and the Younger. *Rudbeckia* ‘Herbstonne,’ topped with drooping yellow flowers reminiscent of shuttlecocks, is one of the tallest of the bunch at about eight feet. (Photo 1). It makes an impressive and elegant statement in a perennial border. Pressed into more prosaic service is *Rudbeckia laciniata* ‘Hortensia,’ similarly tall but with doubled, pom-pom flowers. Widely used by Victorians to screen privies, it is still known today as “outhouse flower,” and has another apt common moniker, “gold drop” (Photo 2). *Rudbeckia fulgida*, a North American native, went to Germany for a makeover by plantsman Karl Foerster and came back as the cultivar ‘Goldsturm.’ It grows to perhaps three feet, has cheerful yellow-orange flowers with dark centers, and is now beloved the world over (Photo 3). Very similar Black-eyed Susans (*R. hirta*) are natives often seen along roadsides and were developed into garden-worthy “Gloriosa Daisies,” first at nearby Smith College and later by the Burpee Company. Featuring dazzling blossoms ranging from dark burgundy to bright yellow, they are short-lived perennials but still merit planting (Photo 4).

Get ready for some gnashing of teeth with the sunflowers (genus *Helianthus*) – there are more than seventy to learn. Beyond the annual varieties grown commercially for oil and birdseed, as well as the flashy garden types, the North American natives inhabit a wide variety of environments. A wildling in our backyard I believe to be woodland sunflower (*H. divaricatus*) shoots up to about five feet then presents its yellow flowers (Photo 5). It could, however, be hairy sunflower (*H. hirsutus*). The primary distinction between the two, it seems, is the degree of hairiness of the stems. Confusingly similar in flower and foliage (at least to me) is *H. tuberosus*, but this plant sports edible underground tubers important to early native Americans and in vogue with foodies nowadays. Also known as Jerusalem artichoke, it has no connection to the ancient city or the dip ingredient. I’ve come to like ashy sunflower (*H. mollis*), partly for its gray-green foliage clasped closely to the stems, but also because I can identify it. It grows well in our Demonstration Garden in dry soil and full sun. While it would be fun to consider willow-leaved, cucumber-leaved, doubtful and ambiguous sunflowers, too, neither summer nor this column is long enough.

Text and photos 1, 3 and 5 by David Chinery
Mainstream people have advertising campaigns such as “Got Milk?” and “Takes A Licking And Keeps On Tick-ing” stuck in their heads, while gardeners may remember “Fall Is For Planting.” This slogan was launched a num-
er of years ago by the nursery industry, but unlike many other products of Madison Avenue, this one was both true and a good idea.

Horticultural research and real-world experience has shown that many types of deciduous trees and shrubs respond well to fall planting. Warm soil and cool air temperatures are conducive to a transplant’s success, encouraging root growth but not much water loss through the foliage. Roots grow as long as the soil temperature remains above about 40F, so a tree planted now can regenerate roots both fall and next spring, strengthening the plant before the heat of summer returns. Remember that new plants require adequate water, and while the demand is less in fall versus summer, make sure they get a good soaking at least weekly until the ground freezes.

Mulching is also a good idea, since it will retain soil moisture and slow down weeds. Pruning is not needed unless dead, diseased, crossing or broken branches are found. In most cases, you can skip fertilizing woody plants, too, unless you are planting an acid-lover. In that case you should have amended the soil pH months before, and while I’ll refrain from scolding, your new plant may not.

Spring is often the best time to plant new evergreens, either the need-
dled or broadleaved type, but if you plant them now, water them well and plan on using an anti-desiccant spray on them in Novem-
ber. These products help the leaves of evergreens retain their moisture during the winter, which is crucial since the root system is small. You can find anti-desiccant concentrates (which are diluted and then applied through a sprayer) at most garden centers under a variety of brand names. A little planning can avoid your evergreen from becoming ever-brown by next spring.

Garden centers don’t want trees and shrubs kicking around when they bring out the plastic reindeer and fake firs in a few months, so nursery stock will soon be on sale. And we all know how gardeners jump on bargains like aphids on a peach tree.

You can also buy now, plant later, if you shop for container plants. At the end of each growing season I have a flock of contain plants which, for a variety of reasons, never made it into the ground. I also am prone to late sea-
son garden center bargains. The trick to overwintering plants successfully is to have their roots chill, then stay cold all winter. It’s not the cold that kills, but the temperature fluctuations. I simply round up all these stragglers and herd them into the vegetable garden, where I dig each a shallow hole and “plant” them, but leave the container on. After the spring thaw, they just pop out of the ground, and I try to find them a permanent home.

Fall planting: Just Do It.

For more in-depth information, discover “The Cornell Guide for Planting and Maintaining Trees and Shrubs” at https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/3572
One thing many of us do a lot of in this neck of the woods is mow grass. While suburban lawns might get the most care in the forms of fertilizer and irrigation, even country greenswards which get no other love require periodic mowing. Twenty years of pushing a walk-behind model tuckered me out, so I recently graduated to a ride-on and now look forward to spending time with John Deere. But love it or hate it, technology might soon take humans out of the mowing equation altogether.

Last summer, Cornell University’s Turfgrass Science Program teamed up with the independent testing laboratory Consumer Reports to examine robotic lawn mowers. In these trials researchers examined the quality of cut and overall appearance of the lawns as well as the ease of use and reliability of four robotic mowers for a six month period. Their results can be found on the Consumer Reports website as well as a YouTube video.

As a child of the ’70’s, I always expect robots to look like B-9, the smartest member of the cast from “Lost In Space.” Disappointingly, the new lawn mower robots look like streamlined Rubbermaid boxes on wheels. But beyond their bland demeanor they offer some intriguing positives. Most impressive to me is their independence from gasoline and oil, two items every mower operator is always checking and adding. The robots run on batteries and travel to and from a charging station. They can mow an area of any shape enclosed by a perimeter wire installed in the ground. Unlike most of us who push or drive our mower in orderly rows, the robots move and mow in a random pattern. They can be programmed to mow anytime, day or night, and don’t need any of the things I require to do the same job: sunscreen, baseball hat, sunglasses, hearing protection and a cold one in the cupholder.

While a robotic mower promises to increase your free time, it won’t take over your lawn duties entirely. A human is required to install the wire and docking station and keep an eye on the overall operation. The lawn needs to be fairly smooth and level to avoid hang-ups, and hazards such as steps present a problem. Grass allowed to grow too tall can stymie the technology, and a conventional machine (and human) might have to come in and muscle-down the turf before the robot can take over once again. Mowing quality is only average, acceptable but below most conventional mowers. I’m also curious about how the robots deal with autumn leaves, acorns and walnuts, not to mention the occasional doggie calling-card.

The current generation of mowing robots is recommended for lawns of about a half-acre or less. They are pricey: those tested sell for from $1,000 to $2,400. This is in the range of a very capable riding mower, and considerably more than a nice self-propelled walk-behind model, which costs about 400 greenbacks. While not in my near future, these smart machines will only get bigger, better, and maybe even cheaper.
This month’s photo collage comes from Rensselaer County Master Gardener Kathy Hartley. She writes, “The Hawaiian Islands have a diverse ecology ranging from rainforests to wind-swept mountain crests. Because of their volcanic origins, these islands have few “native” plants….humans who found their way to these islands introduced most of the species found here. Most of us think of tropical flowering plants when we think of the Hawaiian Islands: hibiscus, plumeria, and ginger for example. But there are many other types of plants that thrive here.”
* September is the month that marks the end of summer and the beginning of fall in the garden. This is the time we start thinking about finishing up, covering up, and cleaning up.

* The summer heat is now fading so we can concentrate on lawns: dethatching, overseeding and fertilizing.

* Fall fertilization has received a lot of attention in recent years. Research has shown that as temperatures start to drop in the fall, the grass growth slows considerably. However, root systems are still actively growing and will continue to grow well into November. By fertilizing in early September and once more in mid to late October, you are encouraging a deeper root system which will in turn give the grass better heat tolerance next summer.

* Before you begin any fertilization program, you should have your soil tested for at least the pH and preferably for the range of nutrients. Cornell Cooperative Extension can do this test for you. Contact your county’s office at the phone number or email address listed on page 9.

* Bring in the houseplants that have been outside. They must readjust to inside conditions. Be sure to check for insects and diseases beforehand and take action before the pests become a problem.

* While tending to the houseplants, take cuttings to grow for Christmas gifts. By Christmas they will be an ideal size.

* Pinch the growing point out of Brussels Sprout plants in order to make the “sprouts” develop fully.

* Don’t do any more pruning of trees and shrubs beyond essentials such as removing dead limbs.

* The vegetable garden is winding down. Remember to remove dead and diseased debris from the garden to prevent disease problems next year.

* For those of you who don’t feel like hanging up the hoe just yet, try another row of lettuce and radishes.

* Locate the material you use to ward off the frost. Rowcover cloth, burlap, and plastic are some items that can be used. Tomatoes, eggplants and peppers are probably the only plants left in the garden susceptible to frost unless cold weather comes earlier than usual. In that event you also need to plan on covering squash and pumpkins.

* Think about planting a cover crop in the vegetable garden as areas go out of use. The top growth will protect the soil from erosion and compaction. The roots of the cover crop will aid in improving aeration and drainage of the soil. Both top growth and root matter will add organic matter when the ground is tilled in the spring.

Text by Master Gardener Peggy Growell
Day Tripping…
...A few botanical gems to see in a day!

When your days are no longer filled with garden chores, take some time to consider the many day trips that might stimulate garden ideas but would also be great fun! The New York Botanical Garden, located in the Bronx on 250 acres, is a wealth of horticultural treasure. This year the NYBG is celebrating its 125th year and for much of 2016 the sculpture of Dale Chihuly has been on display in the gardens. September 17-18 is Blues, Brews, and Botany weekend in the gardens and The Japanese Art of Kiku is featured from October 8th to the 30th. Kiku is an ancient horticultural art form that will amaze and delight you with intriguing shapes, colors and forms of the many varieties of the chrysanthemum flower. And from November 21st to January 18, 2017, the Holiday Train Show graces the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory with over 150 replicas of historic New York Buildings. All are made from natural and plant materials and are displayed as part of a miniature world of railway trains and trolleys traversing the greenhouse. This is an absolute delight for adults and children! Don’t leave without a visit to the Shop in the Garden for wonderful horticultural books, gifts, and supplies. The New York Botanical Garden is located at Fordham Road on the Bronx River Parkway. For more information call (718) 817-8779 or visit the website at www.nybg.org.

Also in the Bronx is Wave Hill located at 675 West 252nd Street and often called the “most beautiful place in New York.” Sited on 28 acres overlooking the Hudson River and the Palisades, Wave Hill was once a private estate. Now a public garden, Wave Hill has greenhouses, several gardens, historic buildings, and woodlands that enhance the environmental education that seeks to foster a relationship between people and nature. Garden walks, talks, and workshops are scheduled throughout the year. Family Art Projects take place on Saturdays and Sundays: see the website calendar for a breakdown of classes. For additional information call (718) 549-3200 or visit www.wavehill.org.

Perhaps the most unique garden site in our travel area is the High Line, a public park built on a historic freight line than ran from 1930 to 1980 above the streets of Manhattan’s West Side. This linear park runs from Gansevoort Street in the meat packing district to West 34th Street between 10th and 12th Avenues. The park is 1.45 miles long, handicap accessible, and maintained by the Friends of the High Line. Construction began in 2006 following a garden plan designed by Piet Oudolf who sought to “keep it wild.” The first section opened in 2009 and now all three sections are open year-round 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM. See: www.thehighline.org

On historic Route 7A in Manchester, Vermont is Robert Todd Lincoln’s Hildene, a Georgian Revival mansion with faithfully restored formal gardens. While the gardens are the jewels of the landscape, November and December finds the foliage coming inside as holiday decoration. Thanksgiving weekend kicks off the holiday season with an open house featuring dried floral arrangements. Mid December the cross country ski center opens to share the grounds with visitors in a sporting manner and in early December the house is open for visitors to see Holiday decorations from the early 1900’s. To find Hildene on the web, go to www.hildene.com or call (802) 362-1788. Don’t let the cold winter days keep you house bound. Get out and explore the possibilities!

Text by Sue Pezzolla and photos by David Chinery
“A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers, but borrowed from his children.”

John James Audubon
(1785-1851)

Gardening Questions?
Call The Master Gardeners!

In Albany County: Call 765-3514 weekdays from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM and ask to speak to a Master Gardener. You can also email your questions by visiting their website at www.ccealbany.com

In Schenectady County: Call 372-1622 from 9:00 AM to Noon, follow the prompt to speak to a Master Gardener and press #1. You can also email your questions by visiting their website at http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/schenectady/

In Rensselaer County: Call 272-4210 from 9:00 AM to Noon and ask to speak to a Master Gardener. You can also email your questions to Dhc3@cornell.edu

“Root Concerns: Notes from the underground” is a shared publication of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer, Albany and Schenectady Counties. It is published by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County.
Talks in the Garden
SUMMER 2016
Tips for the backyard gardener series

Join Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners for a summer series
that will kick your gardening skills up a notch or two.
These evening classes will meet in the Memorial Garden Gazebo
at CCE, 24 Martin Road in Voorheesville with the gardens as our classroom.
Call to register: contact Sue Pezzolla at 765-3516 cost is $5 per class or $20 for the series.
Checks made out to CCE Albany and mailed to 24 Martin Road, Voorheesville, NY 12186

July 27  6:30pm  Herb Gardening with the Shakers
Join Master Gardeners Cathie Gifford and Lee Ryan to learn about the Shaker influence on herb gardening and
the collection and sale of seeds. The class will include all aspects of selecting and growing herbs.

August 2  6:30pm  Low Maintenance Perennial Gardening
Master Gardener Judith Fetterley will share her tips for planting wisely to maximize garden interest and minimize
grain chores. Learn how good plant choices can make a big difference.

August 11  6:30pm  Ornamental Grasses and how to use them
Master Gardener Keith Lee will share ideas for choosing and placing ornamental grasses in the garden. You will
learn which types are best for backyard gardens and how to incorporate them into an existing landscape.

August 18  6:00 pm  Compost Basics
The Master Gardener compost team will be on hand to discuss and show several types of composting systems for
the backyard gardener. If you have been curious about what type of compost system would be best for you, this
is the class! Participants will be given handouts and a sample of finished compost. This class will meet in the com-
post demonstration area across the parking lot from the CCE main building.

August 25  6:00 pm  Vegetable gardening 101 and the basics of raised bed gardening
Join Master Gardeners Phyllis Rosenblum and Luanne Whitbeck for a tour of the demonstration garden raised
bed vegetable garden to learn why raised bed gardens are often the best approach for vegetable growing. You
will learn about garden preparation, selecting the best transplants, extending the growing season and how to
manage perennial crops.
Led by David Chinery from the Cornell Cooperative Extension, enjoy a 1-hour walk though the Papscanee Island Nature Preserve and discover the various species of plants and animals that make the 156-acre Preserve and Hudson River shoreline their home. Cottonwood trees, buckthorn shrub, and bittersweet vine reflect the history of the land farmed by the Mohican Indians for thousands of years. The preserve also boasts a variety of habitats, including marsh, river bank, and floodplain. This riparian setting is a pristine example of nature reinventing itself. Over 30 acres of the preserve are still farmed today, giving the land the distinction of being under active agriculture (corn) longer than any other lands in the U.S. Over six miles of hiking trails offer public access to over 2 miles of Hudson River shoreline. From 9J, turn Right at Preserve South Entrance sign onto Staats Island Rd.; go .25 mi. cross Amtrak tracks, right into Preserve parking lot.

Sponsored by: Rensselaer County Environmental Management Council, Ann M. Shaughnessy, 518.270.2888
Join us for the 6th annual:

INTERNATIONAL PHALAENOPSIS ALLIANCE
"FOCUS ON PHALS" DAY
Co-hosted by the North Eastern New York Orchid Society

Sunday, September 11, 2016

AT SAME LOCATION AS LAST YEAR! At Cornell Cooperative Extension-Albany Cty 24 Martin Road, Voorheesville, NY 12186

In conjunction with the North Eastern New York Orchid Society, IPA is pleased to present its 6th Annual Speakers’ Day, “Focus On Phals”. This day-long event will include our keynote speaker, Dr. Yin-Tung Wang, Consultant & Adjunct Professor at Texas A&M University, sharing his vast knowledge of Phalaenopsis culture. Joining him will be Rob Sheppard, owner & hybridizer of Sapphire Dragon Orchids who will update us on his breeding program & modern trends to achieve cerulean blue Phalaenopsis. Carri Raven-Riemann of the orchidPhile, Past IPA President & current Regional Director, will update us on some of the cutting-edge breeding as seen at the Taiwan 2016 TIOS Show, including some exciting new directions from some of the smaller boutique hybridizers who are always thinking outside the box.

The day will also include a Q&A opportunity and a mini-auction of select plants. The Registration Fee just covers the cost of morning refreshments and a light lunch. We invite all orchidists, IPA members & non-members alike, to join us for this very special Speakers’ Day. Vendors will be: Sapphire Dragon Orchids, the orchidPhile, Piping Rock Orchids and Kelley’s Korner Orchid Supplies.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 10:00 am</td>
<td>Morning Refreshments &amp; Sales Tables Open for Early Birds</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:45 am</td>
<td>Rob Sheppard: <em>Get the Blues? Coeruleus to the Rescue!</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45 – 11:30 am</td>
<td>Carri Raven-Riemann: <em>Happiness Is: Exciting New Directions in Breeding</em></td>
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<td>11:30 – 12:15 pm</td>
<td>Mini Auction (to raise funds for future meetings)</td>
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<td>12:15 – 1:15 pm</td>
<td>Lunch Break &amp; Sales Tables Open</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:15 – 2:00 pm</td>
<td>Dr. Yin-Tung Wang: <em>Tips to Get the Best from your Phals in the Home</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 – 2:30 pm</td>
<td>Q&amp;A with the Speakers (Time permitting)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30 – 3:00 pm</td>
<td>Last chance for sales</td>
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*** PLEASE NOTE: EARLY & FULLY PAID REGISTRATIONS BY AUGUST 30th ARE REQUIRED TO ASSURE WE HAVE ENOUGH FOOD FOR EVERYONE! ***

Registration for NENY Orchid Society Members Only: $15  Registration for NON-NENY Orchid Society Members: $18

For further information contact:
New England Regional Director: Carri Raven-Riemann at orchidphile@optimum.net or (203) 339-7255
New York/Eastern Canada Regional Director: Marilyn Shapiro at mshapiro@juno.com or (212) 831-3076
Mid-Atlantic: MD/DE/PA/NJ Regional Directors: Mitch Porter at mitchporter@comcast.net or (215) 943-7128 & Les Werner at leswer@verizon.net or (410) 793-0766

Additional information will also be available on the IPA Website (www.phal.org)

REGISTRATION FORM: Must be received no later than September 5, 2016

IPA/NENY Orchid Society “Focus on Phals” for Sunday, September 11, 2016

NAME(S): ________________________________ TELEPHONE: ____________________________

ADDRESS: __________________ CITY: ________ STATE: _____ ZIP: ________

E-MAIL: __________________ HOMER ORCHID SOCIETY: __________________

NENY Orchid Society Members Only: Enclosed is my check for ______ registration(s) at $15 each

Non-NENY Orchid Society Members: Enclosed is my check for ______ registration(s) at $18 each (payable to IPA)

Send form with check, Payable to IPA, to: IPA, c/o Marilyn Shapiro, 235 East 87th Street, Apt 5L, New York, NY 10128

For Vendor Pre-Orders: Please mention "IPA Regional Pre-Order" in subject line:
Kelly’s Korner Orchid Supplies: www.kkorchid.com
orchidPhile: orchidphile@optimum.net — or — www.facebook.com/orchidphile
Sapphire Dragon Orchids: www.sapphiredragonorchids.com
Piping Rock Orchids: www.pipingrockorchids.com

Please visit www.nenyos.com for additional information.