

BIG Changes at a Small Nursery

We Invite You to Visit us
at Tranquil Lake Nursery

A year ago *Tranquil Lake Nursery* in Rehoboth came under new ownership, while the land was preserved forever for future gardeners, horticulturists and farmers. In June of 2013, Warren Leach and Philip Boucher, partners in the business for twenty-eight years, signed paperwork with the Mass. Department of Agricultural Resources to put a permanent agricultural preservation covenant on the land, so that it can never be developed and must be farmed. At the same time, in conjunction with the agricultural preservation, Warren Leach and Debi Hogan, horticulturist and wife, bought Phil's share of the business, becoming the new owners of the nursery that they have nurtured together for so long.

Warren and Debi started making the commitment to preserving the land three years ago, when faced with the real possibility that the dissolution of the partnership would require that this lovely farm would be sold for house lots. As they looked out at the enchantingly beautiful gardens and fields of flowers along with the idyllic pastures and woodlands along the river, they felt that it was important to find a way to preserve the land. They explored options, ultimately joining forces with the Rehoboth Land Trust, The Trustees of Reservations and the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture Resources to make the agricultural covenant possible.

The nursery farmland is valuable for its agricultural, horticultural and environmental qualities. It resides on twenty-two pastoral acres of stone-free soil bordered by the pristine Palmer River. It historically existed as rural open space and sustained some form of agriculture, as the iconic, stone farm walls bear witness. The daylily and iris nursery was started in 1970 by ardent plant collector and dye chemist, Charles Trommer and wife Edy, a Rehoboth school teacher. In 1986, horticulturists Warren Leach and Philip Boucher bought the nursery and expanded the business in horticultural breadth, offering a diversity of container plants as well as distinctive landscape design. While Phil oversaw the daylily and iris fields, Warren managed the landscape design business and also built the display gardens, adding a new garden or garden feature every year. These gardens provided visitors with the opportunity to learn as they explored mixed borders of shrubs and perennials, water gardens, permanent containers, mosaic paths, distinguished mature dwarf conifers, ornamental vegetables, herbs, tender perennials along with an assortment of hand-made garden structures.

The diversity of wildlife that abounds on the site is another captivating and important element of the nursery. Visitors are attracted to the families of bluebirds, orioles, swallows, waxwings, hummingbirds and herons, as well as the many other birds that are readily viewed in the fields and gardens, including the hawks overhead. The ponds offer regular sitings of turtles, frogs and goldfish including leopard frogs, sun turtles and box turtles. The gardens and fields also provide an amazing site for viewing all kinds of insects pollinators. Lightning bugs ignite the fields in June and dozens of butterflies are regularly seen feeding on the flowers. Down by the river and irrigation pond, the clear waters teem with native fish.



We are now working to preserve the daylily and iris collection as well as the display gardens as we plan for the future. We are also keeping the rich agricultural history and environmental diversity of the land in mind. Last year, we worked to cut back encroaching field edges and remove noxious plant pests. The iris collection was saved and transplanted. The former iris field is now being rejuvenated with cover crops in anticipation of an edible production crop, perhaps asparagus! We began to reclaim a fallow field and are exploring the possibility of a CSA for food crops or other collaborations.

Tranquil Lake Nursery is a small local business with deep roots in the community. We also need the support of the community to expand and thrive. We are devoted to sharing our horticultural knowledge and passions and invite you to partake in our mission of horticulture and environmental stewardship. We hope that you will visit soon and see the changes that are taking place. Enjoy the eight acres of daylily and iris fields, wander through the two acres of display gardens and take in the wildlife and natural resources. Tranquil Lake Nursery is open Thursday to Sunday from 9 to 5. The nursery is located at 45 River Street in Rehoboth just off Route 44 or at www.tranquil-lake.com.