

No Boat Needed to Experience Celia Thaxter's Appledore Island Garden

Monday, June 28, 2021

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Caption: A bright poppy, one of Celia Thaxter's favorite flowers, blooms in the garden at Prescott Park along the Portsmouth waterfront.

Photo credit: Robbin Ray/UNH

DURHAM, N.H.— The colorful island garden of beloved writer Celia Thaxter will be blooming at Prescott Park in Portsmouth again this summer giving aficionados another rare chance to take in the sights and sounds of this cherished historic garden.

Each summer, horticultural and literary lovers of the popular poet make the coveted 10-mile pilgrimage by boat to Appledore Island to visit the restored garden maintained by Shoals Marine Laboratory (SML), which is jointly run by the University of New Hampshire and Cornell University. But in the summers of 2020 and 2021, because of COVID-19 precautions, SML made the difficult decision to cancel day trips to the island and decided to look for a temporary site to reimagine the garden on the mainland.

“This gives those who haven't been able to make the trip to Appledore Island an opportunity to take in the beauty of this legendary garden,” said Jennifer Seavey, SML executive director. “Visitors from around the world are passionate about seeing Thaxter's garden and Prescott Park has been the perfect temporary site. We are grateful for our partnership with the City of Portsmouth.”

Each winter, SML works with Rolling Green Nursery in Greenland to cultivate a specific blend of flowers from seed to recreate the garden on Appledore Island so that it accurately reflects the time period and the Thaxter's original designs outlined in her book "An Island Garden". As the garden grows throughout the season it changes and emerges to encompass a wide variety of plants. Some of the highlights include many types of poppies (which were Thaxter's favorite), hollyhocks, dahlias, sweet peas, foxgloves, nigella, scabiosa and many others.

This year hosted tours are being offered to give summer visitors to Portsmouth's waterfront an opportunity to learn more about the life of Celia Thaxter, the famous art colony the garden inspired, stewarding the garden and how this historic garden fits with the conservation mission of SML. Tours will be led by SML Executive Director Jennifer Seavey and Garden Steward Terry Cook. They are free to the public, but advanced registration is required and spots are limited. To register go to www.shoalsmarinelaboratory.org and click on the [News section](#).

Dates:

Friday, July 16 at 4 p.m. EST

Friday, July 30 at 4 p.m. EST

Friday, Aug 6 at 4 p.m. EST

Rain dates: Friday, Aug 13 and Friday, Sept 10

Thaxter grew up in the Isles of Shoals and became a favorite American author in the late 19th century. She lived much of her life on Appledore Island where her cottage garden served as a cutting garden for her family's hotel. She welcomed a steady stream of well-known writers, musicians and painters to the island to enjoy vibrant conversations in lively salons in her parlor. Impressionist painter and dear friend Childe Hassam made her garden famous in his paintings and Thaxter published a book with collected prose and watercolor illustrations of her gardens.

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PHOTOS FOR DOWNLOAD

https://www.unh.edu/unhtoday/sites/default/files/media/celia_thaxter_gardeners_2021.jpg

Caption: Volunteers help plant Celia Thaxter's garden at Prescott Park for the public to enjoy this summer. From left to right: Marie Nickerson, Deborah Twombly, Janis Kreiger, and Garden Steward, Terry Cook.

Photo credit: SML

https://www.unh.edu/unhtoday/sites/default/files/media/celia_garden_rolling_green_seedlings_2_2021.png

Caption: Shoals Marine Laboratory works with Rolling Green Nursey to select seeds of Celia Thaxter's favorite annuals that are grown over the winter until they are ready to plant.

Photo credit: Terry Cook

https://www.unh.edu/unhtoday/sites/default/files/media/celia_sign_flowers_prescott_robbin_ray.jpg

Caption: A sign near Celia Thaxter's garden offers historical information about the popular poet, the flowers and Shoals Marine Laboratory's efforts to steward the island's rich cultural resources.

Photo credit: Robbin Ray/UNH

https://www.unh.edu/unhtoday/sites/default/files/media/poppy_at_presscott_robbin_ray.jpg

Caption: A bright poppy, one of Celia Thaxter's favorite flowers, blooms in the garden at Prescott Park along the Portsmouth waterfront.

Photo credit: Robbin Ray/UNH

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