

Celia Thaxter's Island Garden Welcomes Visitors Back to the Isle of Shoals

Thursday, May 12, 2022



DURHAM, N.H.— The enchanting and colorful garden of beloved writer Celia Thaxter will bloom in its original home plot on Appledore Island after a two-year hiatus. Flower lovers and fans of the popular poet can once again experience the sights and sounds of this cherished historic garden that Thaxter started over a century ago.



BRIGHTLY COLORED FLOWERS SWAY IN THE OCEAN BREEZE IN CELIA THAXTER'S GARDEN ON APPLEDORE ISLAND.

Boat reservations can now be made for the 10-mile pilgrimage to the Isle of Shoals to tour the restored garden maintained by the Shoals Marine Laboratory (SML), which is jointly run by the University of New Hampshire and Cornell University. In the summers of 2020 and 2021, because of COVID-19 precautions,

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SML made the difficult decision to cancel day trips to the island.

“Visitors from around the world are passionate about seeing Celia’s garden and we love having them come to discover it’s beauty,” said Jennifer Seavey, SML’s executive director. “We are excited to welcome them back to the island to see the vibrant garden inspired and adored by Thaxter herself.”

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 Thaxter’s original designs outlined in her book “An Island Garden”. As the cottage 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. During the pandemic, SML worked with the town of Portsmouth, which provided a temporary site at Prescott Park, to reimagine the garden on the mainland for horticulture and literary lovers to enjoy.

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 pocket 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.

Garden tours will run on Fridays beginning June 24, 2022 until August 26, 2022. To register go to <https://www.shoalsmarinelaboratory.org/event/celia-thaxters-garden-tours>. SML also runs several overnight public programs on

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Appledore Island later in the summer. For more information go to:

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PHOTOS FOR DOWNLOAD

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

Caption: Iconic view of bright orange poppies blooming in Celia Thaxter's cottage island garden was captured in a famous painting by impressionist Childe Hassam.

Photo credit: Robbin Ray/UNH

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

Caption: Foxgloves, in all their glory, are a centerpiece of Celia Thaxter's island garden on Appledore Island. Garden tours are offered by the Shoals Marine Laboratory from June to August.

Photo credit: Robbin Ray/UNH

https://www.unh.edu/unhtoday/sites/default/files/media/celia_garden_jenn_seavey_2019.jpg

Caption: Brightly colored flowers sway in the ocean breeze in Celia Thaxter's garden on Appledore Island. Looking out from the garden it is easy to see why she loved this spot.

Photo credit: Jennifer Seavey/SML

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