

# Congratulations to Monticello's Peter Hatch

by **Leslie G. Bowman** - May 3, 2011

Before Peter Hatch's arrival more than thirty years ago, Monticello was extolled as great architecture, and the home of one of the country's most important figures. It was Peter who uncovered Jefferson's experimental garden at Monticello, recognized its revolutionary influence and restored it for posterity.

This past weekend Peter was recognized for his lifelong devotion to restoring one of the most important gardens in America. His significant contributions to historic preservation and gardening were recognized on Saturday, April 30, by the Garden Club of America at its annual Medal Awards Dinner, held in Indianapolis, Indiana. Peter was awarded the Garden Club of America's Historic Preservation medal for his outstanding work in the field of preservation and restoration of historic gardens.



I consider him a living national treasure for American horticulture. As the director of gardens and grounds for Monticello, he has devoted his life and work to meticulously researching and restoring Thomas Jefferson's pioneering garden. To the awe and delight of his various audiences, he combines the gifts of scholar, gardener, orator and writer. His passion is infectious and his work ethic inimitable.

Thirty years ago Peter inspired his crew and reversed years of neglect to reveal Jefferson's genius with the land, from the eight-acre vegetable and fruit garden, to the flower garden on the iconic West Lawn, to the orchards and vineyards, and even the ornamental forest that Jefferson dubbed "the Grove."

In 1987, he founded one of the only scholarly centers of its kind in this country, the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants. Peter and his team are responsible for 2,400 acres at Monticello, including a 179-acre public park that graces the entrance corridor to Jefferson's little mountain.

He also found time to launch countless garden education programs over the last three decades that have served hundreds of thousands of enthusiasts through garden tours, weekend walks, special workshops, and celebrity lectures. Perhaps his crowning achievement in this regard is the two-week Historic Landscape Institute at Monticello, in partnership with the University of Virginia. Almost five years ago he launched his homage to

Jefferson’s “farm to table” philosophy with the Heritage Harvest Festival, a fall event that attracted more than 3,000 people in 2010 because of its historic and timely message of fresh, local food, grown on the land—a legacy of Thomas Jefferson.

We are so proud of the work Peter has done at Monticello and how he continues to honor the legacy of Jefferson. Congratulations Peter—you deserve it!

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