Burlington is the perfect place for this year’s distinctive, open forum with plenty of white space to fuel learning, engagement, inspiration, collaboration, and more! This participant-driven, participation-rich event will provide the perfect forum to unleash the collective knowledge and creativity of The Group!

*Bring your biggest challenges and boldest ideas... that’s what we’ll focus on together!*

Grab a seat and get ready to...
The Fall Event is the perfect forum for progressive garden retailers, consultants and vendors to learn, network, exchange ideas, collaborate and create new synergies to fuel success. No matter how long you’ve been in retail or what position you hold in your company, there’s still something you need to learn. There are countless reasons why you should attend The Fall Event, but we’ve managed to narrow it down to five:

1. **Connect with your peers.** We know you’ve heard it all before, but networking is a huge part of your success. Meeting face-to-face with your peers provides an opportunity to collaborate, hear new ideas, and tap into a wealth of knowledge. You can find a mentor – or become one, and develop relationships that can last a lifetime. The Fall Event provides plenty of white space to engage and connect.

2. **Collaborate with our Service Providers.** Our Service Providers are industry experts and solution providers who truly know what is happening in the world of garden center retailing – and they have answers to your questions. The Fall Event provides an opportunity for you to discuss your biggest challenges, explore new ideas, and learn what’s working for others.

3. **Learn from our Speakers and Facilitators.** Our speakers and facilitators are seasoned professionals with proven business success that will introduce you to new concepts and open your mind to new ways of thinking about how you do business every day.

4. **Engage with our Sponsors.** Our sponsors are premier industry suppliers of the products and services you need to run a successful garden center. Invest some time in visiting with them during breaks. See their newest products and spend some one-on-one time discovering what’s new and developing profitable business partnerships.

5. **Relax and have fun.** The Fall Event is a lot of learning packed into a short amount of time, but we always make time for some relaxation and fun! You’ll go home re-energized and ready to apply all that you’ve learned to make your center more successful!

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**The Fall Event 2016 – Houston, Texas**

*We hope to see you in Burlington in the 2017 Group photo!*
The Fall Event Schedule

Sunday, September 17

2:00pm - 5:00pm  *POS User Group Meetings*, SimPOS and Epicor, Burlington Hilton, Montpelier Conference Rooms

Monday, September 18

9:00am - 12:00pm  *POS User Group Meetings*, SimPOS, Counterpoint and Epicor, Burlington Hilton, Montpelier Conference Rooms

9:00am - 1:00pm  *Sponsor Setup*, Burlington Hilton, Adirondack Ballroom Foyer

10:00am - 2:00pm  *Registration Open*, Burlington Hilton, Adirondack Ballroom Foyer

1:00pm - 2:15pm  *Welcome Session*, Burlington Hilton, Lake Champlain Conference Room

2:30pm - 4:00pm  *POWERgrid Sessions*, Burlington Hilton, Andirondack Ballroom

5:00pm - 6:30pm  *Welcome Reception & POWERator Session SignUp*, Burlington Hilton, Garden Terrace

6:30pm  *Discover Burlington – On Your Own*

8:30pm - 10:00pm  *CONNECTIONS*, High Voltage Networking, Burlington Hilton, Mounted Cat

Tuesday, September 19

6:00am - 6:45am  *Group Walk/Run*, Depart from Hotel Lobby Entrance

7:00am - 8:15am  *Breakfast & Special Recognition*, Burlington Hilton, Green Mountain Ballroom

8:30am - 9:30am  *POWERator Sessions*, Burlington Hilton, Adirondack Ballroom

9:45am - 10:45am  *POWERator Sessions*, Burlington Hilton, Adirondack Ballroom

11:00am - 12:00pm  *POWERator Sessions*, Burlington Hilton, Adirondack Ballroom

12:00pm - 1:45pm  *POWERLunch*, Burlington Hilton, Green Mountain Ballroom

1:45pm - 3:15pm  *POWERlutions*, Burlington Hilton, Adirondack Ballroom

3:30pm - 4:30pm  *Personal POWERspectives*, Burlington Hilton, Adirondack Ballroom

4:45pm - 5:30pm  *Group POWERspectives*, Burlington Hilton, Adirondack Ballroom

5:30pm  *Discover Burlington – On Your Own*

8:30pm - 10:00pm  *CONNECTIONS*, High Voltage Networking, Burlington Hilton, Mounted Cat

Wednesday, September 20

7:00am - 8:00am  *Breakfast & Special Recognition*, Burlington Hilton, Green Mountain Ballroom

8:00am - 8:30am  *Load Buses*, Burlington Hilton, Lobby Curbside

8:30am - 7:00pm  *Burlington Tour*

7:00pm  *Discover Burlington – On Your Own*

8:30pm - 10:00pm  *CONNECTIONS*, High Voltage Networking, Burlington Hilton, Mounted Cat

Thursday, September 21

7:00am - 8:00am  *Breakfast & Special Recognition*, Burlington Hilton, Green Mountain Ballroom

8:15am - 9:30am  *P&L Study Review and Awards Presentation*, Burlington Hilton, Adirondack Ballroom

9:45am - 10:45am  *New Admin, New Day... HR Update*, Burlington Hilton, Adirondack Ballroom

10:45am - 11:15am  *Break & FaceTime with Sponsors*, Adirondack Ballroom Foyer

11:15am - 12:00pm  *POWERplay*, Burlington Hilton, Adirondack Ballroom

12:00pm - 1:00pm  Sponsor Teardown
The Fall Event 2017

Harness the Power of GardenCenter Group

The Fall Event is Sponsored by

American Beauties / NorthCreek Nurseries
Bailey Nurseries
Ball Seed Company
Border Concepts
Botanical Interests
Bower & Branch
C. Raker & Sons / Hort Couture
Epicor Software Corp.
The Espoma Company
Garden Center Magazine / GIE Media
GrowIt!
GrowTech Solutions
Henri Studio/Stonecasters
Jolly Gardener / Old Castle
Lawn & Garden Retailer Magazine
Mariner Business Solutions - Counterpoint
Master Nursery Garden Centers
Monrovia
Overdevest Nurseries
Prides Corner Farms
Proven Winners North America
Proven Winners Color Choice
R.W. Rogers Company
Sheridan Nurseries
SimPOS! Software
Star Roses and Plants
Sunrise Marketing
SynRG
TPIE / FNGLA
Willoway Nurseries

Be sure to take advantage of the facetime with our Partners for Success and Sponsors who recognize the unique nature of independent garden center operations and are interested in helping you provide the best products for your customers, have the best products for your business, and provide the best resources for your team. Stop by during breaks to visit these sponsors to learn about their products and specials...you’ll be glad you did!
The Fall Event Program

Monday, September 18

1:00pm - 2:15pm  POWERplan Session, Danny Summers, The Garden Center Group

Danny will set the stage for this year’s Fall Event – a distinctive, open forum with plenty of white space to fuel engagement and inspiration, and introduce our key facilitator – Adrian Segar, world-renowned innovator, speaker, meeting architect, and physicist. Danny describes Adrian as a modern-day Einstein of meeting collaboration. His proven, out-of-the-box approach will help create a program that will adapt to meet your needs, leverage the combined expertise and experience of all participants, and provide unique opportunities for you to discover, connect, share, and learn. No pre-determined workshops or speakers... You determine the agenda, the presenters, the session formats, the focus, and the results! So bring your biggest challenges and your boldest ideas and get ready to Harness the Power of The Group!

This is a mustn’t miss session that sets the stage for the next 28 hours!

2:30pm - 4:00pm  POWERgrid Sessions
Facilitated by Adrian Segar, Robert Hendrickson, Danny Summers

These sessions will provide the framework to generate topics for the POWERator Sessions on Tuesday. You will be assigned to a group and asked three questions that will

• open the door to connect with like-minded people
• uncover topics and questions that create energy for your group
• discover the rich resources, knowledge, creativity and power within your group

We only have a few days together – perhaps a few minutes of potential interaction with each participant, so this POWERgrid is designed to set you on the fast track to making meaningful connections to maximize your opportunities over the next three days.

5:00pm - 6:30pm  Welcome Reception & POWERator Session SignUp

The Welcome Reception is the perfect time to catch up with friends – and make new ones. You will also have time to select your choice of topics for the POWERator Sessions on Tuesday. This casual gathering will feature light hors d’oeuvres and beverage, followed by an open evening to discover Burlington – on your own!

You’ve told us that some of the most meaningful and productive experiences at The Fall Event are a result of the time you spend getting to know and learning from your peers – and we have listened. We know that sitting in a room full of people listening to experts talk is not always what you’re interested in. So this Fall Event will be different... Using the proven “Conferences That Work” model we’ll create an event that adapts to meet your needs. You will determine the agenda, presenters, session format and focus during the first afternoon. Our goal is simple... to create the best possible event for each person, maximize participant interaction and connectedness, strengthen our community, and explore future group initiatives. Sound good? Reserve your seat today and join your peers in Burlington for this innovative event!
Life often comes full-circle. Robert’s horticulture journey began at a backyard garden center in Illinois for two reasons... knowledge and the employee discount... while creating a self-sufficient farm in the process. “I needed to learn how to grow herbs and veggies and buy plants at a discount.” His back to the land adventure was soon replaced by a true love of retail. “Getting people to buy stuff is a lot easier than canning food for the winter.” What followed was fifteen years in the retail trenches, a decade helping garden centers find their success groove, then fifteen years developing The Garden Center Group. Now between on-site consulting and online marketing services comes 3GFarm in Hannibal, Missouri. “This time the focus is on gardens, goats and grandkids.”

Since 1981, Adrian Segar has designed, convened, and facilitated hundreds of conferences in North America and Europe. He has been creating participant-led and participation-rich events, commonly known as unconferences, since 1992. Adrian’s first book “Conferences That Work: Creating Events That People Love” has been described as “THE how-to manual” on creating events that truly engage and capitalize on attendees’ collective wisdom and experience.

Adrian is an acknowledged innovator and speaker on participant-led event design. He has presented at just about every meetings industry event. He has been named as one of the most innovative event professionals by BizBash Magazine, one of MeetingNet's Eleven Most Influential Online Personalities in Meetings and Travel, and has been quoted on the front page of the Wall Street Journal.

In 1973, Adrian earned a Physics B.A. as Postmaster at Merton College, Oxford. At the age of 25, he was awarded a Ph.D. in elementary particle physics from University College, London. 37 years later, the experiment he worked on was awarded the 2009 European Physics Prize. From 1978-1983 Adrian owned and managed Solar Alternative, a solar energy manufacturing company. He also taught college level computer science at Marlboro College for ten years, and was an independent information technology consultant between 1983-2007. Adrian lives in Marlboro, Vermont, is the founder and president of two non-profits, and loves to sing and dance. You can learn more about him on LinkedIn, and on Twitter.
The Fall Event Program

Tuesday, September 19

8:30am - 12:00pm  Three Sets of POWERator Sessions, Chosen and Facilitated by YOU!

Based on your input from the previous day, the POWERator Sessions will cover the topics that are most important to you and your business, facilitated by the most qualified people at The Fall Event. The crowd-sourcing used to create these sessions ensures that we match the collective resources of the Group to participants’ actual needs and wants for learning, connection, and engagement.

1:45pm - 3:15pm  POWERlutions Session, Facilitated by Adrian Segar

The POWERlutions Session will provide you with peer support and advice on a current professional challenge of your choosing. This “Solution Room” creates an environment for participation, peer learning, and targeted problem solving. By the end of the session, you will have received advice and support on one of your most pressing challenges.

3:30pm - 4:30pm  Personal POWERspectives Session, Facilitated by Adrian Segar

The Personal POWERspectives Session will guide you through a review and personnel assessment of what you’ve learned at The Fall Event, and help you determine what you want to change in your professional life or business as a result. After a series of questions and small group work, you’ll leave with a concrete plan for change, and next steps for implementation.

4:45pm - 5:30pm  Group POWERspectives Session, Facilitated by Adrian Segar

The Group POWERspectives Session will allow us to take a collective look at where we started, the path we’ve traveled, and the journey yet to come. The session will start with a candid, public evaluation of The Fall Event, from which we’ll discuss future initiatives for the Group and Fall Event community. This is a time for us to explore collective action that will affect our communal future long after we have left this year’s Fall Event!

With more than 30 years experience in the horticulture industry, Danny brings to The Group extensive business management experience in both non-profit and for-profit. For 18 years he served as Executive Vice President of the Southern Nursery Association (SNA), a regional trade association with more than 1,800 members, and developed one of the industry’s largest trade shows with more than 800+ exhibitors and 10,000+ attendees. His career began in retail at Sears, Roebuck & Co., where he completed management training to become one of the company’s youngest managers at the age of 19. His for-profit experience includes sales and marketing management of retail, wholesale, and manufacturing businesses. Danny promotes participation with the common goal of helping all companies involved in The Group to increase market share, sales and profits.
Wednesday, September 20

8:30am - 7:00pm  The Fall Event Burlington Tour

We’ve put together a full day tour of retail garden centers and a special visit to Shelburne Farms – one of the grandest agricultural estates in America. This 1,400-acre working farm, dairy, market garden, and woodlands was developed in the late 1800’s by Dr. William Seward and Lila Vanderbilt Webb, sister of George Vanderbilt, who was building the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, NC, about the same time.

The four very diverse centers, all with different strengths, share a commonality in that they have all found ways to be successful in a very short season (Zones 4 and 5) in Vermont. This tour will take us on a 48-mile journey around Burlington with the longest bus time under 30 minutes and a total bus time of 98 minutes. That means less riding and more learning! Hop on board for a day you won’t soon forget!

Due to limited space, we have only scratched the surface on these five stops. Visit our website at www.thegardencentergroup.com/the-fall-event-2017-tour for more information and photos.
Claussen’s Florist, Greenhouse & Perennial Farm, Colchester, VT

The day will begin with the first stop, just minutes from our hotel, at Claussen’s Florist & Greenhouse. Claussen’s was founded by William (Bill) Claussen in 1972, when he purchased Carpenter’s Greenhouse, who he had worked for since 1969. Carpenter’s was a small Retail Greenhouse/Farm Stand style operation with a few greenhouses. Bill was the son of a respected German cut rose grower who shipped daily into the NY marketplace to wholesalers selling to florists. Bill set the bar high and that has always been the expectation that Claussen’s have achieved through hard work. He built the greenhouses with the help of his energetic staff, from morning until night, through sweat and tears to achieve his vision.

From the beginning, Bill ran the cash registers, did the books, cared for the plants and managed the entire business almost single-handedly. Although he is semi-retired today, Bill remains the inspiration and backbone of the company, along with Chris Conant, part-owner and Vice President. Chris started in the business in the 1970s possessing a love of flowers and people. Chris’s dedication to fostering lasting relationships with their customers, along with Bill’s devotion and that of over 35 employees, awarded Claussen’s Florist & Greenhouse ‘VermontRetailer of the Year in 2008’.

Today, Claussen’s has three distinct divisions. Retail Garden Center (50%), Retail Florist (5%) and Wholesale Florist (45%).

Their Wholesale Division sells annuals and perennials they have grown as well as re-wholesaling Florida-grown tropica ls. Claussen’s grows approximately 95% of their green goods.

The Takeaway: How multiple finely-tuned divisions can work together to build a successful business.
Gardener’s Supply – Intervale, Burlington, VT

The idea for Gardener’s Supply began germinating in 1982. Back then, it was difficult for organic gardeners to find the tools and supplies they needed for the way they gardened. Will Raap, an avid organic gardener himself, saw an opportunity to fill this gap. From spending time in Europe, he knew that gardeners there could choose from a wide range of quality gardening tools and supplies. So he began importing these items and offering them for sale through the mail. The idea was an instant success and in 1983, Will and eight others founded Gardener’s Supply Company.

This Vermont-based, employee-owned business is led by avid gardeners, eager to find quality tools and earth-friendly gardening supplies that they can use in their own gardens, and share with friends and customers. This gardener-to-gardener partnership is at the heart of their business.

In 1986, founder Will Raap, spearheaded a clean-up effort to restore 700 acres of bottomland, known as Intervale, within the city limits of Burlington, to its agricultural roots. In the 1980s, the Intervale was a dangerous and unwelcoming place for visitors. Agricultural fields had been abandoned, and people were using the Intervale as an informal dumping ground for tires, furniture and other garbage. Thanks to more than 20 years of extraordinary work by the Intervale Center and those who farm here, the Intervale has been transformed into a nationally recognized center for sustainable agriculture and is located adjacent to the Gardener’s Supply – Intervale location.

Today, visitors find in the Intervale a unique and innovative community built around growing, eating and celebrating locally grown food. At the Intervale Center, they find a mature nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening community food systems by enhancing farm viability, promoting the sustainable use of agricultural lands and engaging people in the food system.

The Takeaway: How a retail center and a mail order operation can find synergies and spawn the development of a community garden (Intervale Center).
Gardener’s Supply – Williston, Williston, VT
Originally built by Oliver Gardner who operated as Four Seasons Garden Center (1978-2008), the current garden center was built in 2003. The building has won several architectural design awards. Gardener’s Supply purchased the facility in 2008. With this purchase, the Williston location has become the flagship Gardener’s Supply Company retail store, featuring Vermont’s largest retail nursery, Gardener’s Supply Company outlet store, and the area’s largest rewholesale nursery.

In 1987, after their third year in business, Gardener’s Supply Company adopted an Employee Stock Ownership Program (ESOP) that allows all employees to earn stock and share in company profits. As of December 2009, Gardener’s Supply is 100 percent employee-owned, ensuring that customers can expect excellent products and service from people who own the company. By engaging staff as owners, they unlock the creativity and commitment needed to be responsive to customers, sustain a vibrant focus on gardening and cultivate a compassionate corporate culture. Employees are encouraged to learn about all aspects of the business, so they can be active participants in shaping the business future and can contribute to the mutual success.

Gardener’s Supply Company does business with hundreds of suppliers across the U.S., in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. But their largest and most important supplier – by far – is their own small-but-mighty factory called Serac (located 19 mi. North in St. Albans, Vermont) that manufactures items such as garden carts, raised bed kits, and elevated gardens, and light systems sold exclusively through Gardener’s Supply. This focus on product development plays a key part in their continuing success.

The commitment to promoting gardening, health, earth stewardship, and vibrant communities has strengthened over time and is a source of pride for their employee-owners. Corporate giving, at the rate of 8% of pre-tax profits, has allowed their donations program to distribute more than $1.6 million in cash and products to local and national non-profit organizations that are making the world a better place through gardening.

The Takeaway: How a retail center and a rewholesale nursery can work together to build a profitable operation on such a large footprint.
Horsford Gardens & Nursery, Charlotte, VT

Horsford’s is Vermont’s oldest nursery, founded in 1893. It became known as an international pioneer in the hybridizing of lilies and offered nearly 60 varieties for sale by 1895. As the nursery business grew so did the selection of plants they offered to include trees, shrubs, perennials, vines, evergreens and roses. These were all grown from seed, divisions or rooted cuttings, started in a glass greenhouse and then lined out neatly in the perfectly maintained fields. By the late 1970’s much of the plant material sold was bought in rather than grown on site.

In 1985, with the idea of returning the business to its glory days, the nursery was purchased by Charlie Proutt and Eileen Schilling. Hard work, long hours and great help from like-minded staff enabled them to realize that vision. The nursery once again grows approximately 80% of the plants they sell either from cuttings, seeds or root division.

Horsford’s grows shade, crabapple, and fruit trees, evergreens and fruiting and flowering shrubs on over 20 acres. One acre is dedicated entirely to growing thousands of hardy perennials. Perennials are grown from divisions and seed to supply local demand for traditional selections, ever-popular native and pollinator plants, and rare and unusual varieties. Two restored antique glass greenhouses are used to produce annual flowers, hanging baskets, patio planters, vegetable plants and kitchen herbs in the spring and plant propagation later in the season.

Field-grown trees, shrubs and evergreens are sold at retail and wholesale to landscapers or their own landscape company, Distinctive Landscaping. Extensive display gardens have been added, and a garden gift shop.

Today, Charlie, Eileen and their staff exemplify how you can be successful as a traditional 50-acre nursery operation.

The Takeaway: How a traditional 120-year old nursery can be true to its roots and yet adapt to be successful in today’s marketplace.
The Fall Event Tour

Shelburne Farms, Shelburne, VT

In 1886, Dr. William Seward and Lila Vanderbilt Webb began acquiring farmland on the shores of Lake Champlain to create a model agricultural estate. About the same time, Lila’s younger brother, George Vanderbilt was constructing Biltmore Estate in Asheville, NC. Landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. created conceptual designs for the landscape. Prominent architect Robert H. Robertson designed four major buildings: The Farm Barn, Breeding Barn, Coach Barn and Shelburne House (now the Shelburne Inn). By the early 1900s, the Webb’s 3,800-acre farm was renowned for its innovative practices, hackney horse breeding enterprise, and grand family residence.

The heyday was short-lived. Beginning around 1910, farming operations and other activities began to shrink, and subsequent generations struggled to find a workable future for this singular farm. Shelburne Farms began a rebirth in 1972, when family descendants founded a nonprofit organization of the same name, dedicated to conservation education. For 40 years, the organization has offered educational opportunities for children of all ages to learn about sustainability and their connections to the natural and agricultural world. As stewards of the property, the nonprofit has placed much of the land under conservation easements, and preserved and rehabilitated the buildings to new uses. In 2001 the property became a National Historic Landmark.

Shelburne Farms is considered one of the grandest agricultural estates in America. Today, the mission is to cultivate a conservation ethic for a sustainable future by educating young people to become ecologically literate and caring citizens who make choices that create a healthy and just world and practicing the stewardship of natural, agricultural, and cultural resources. This 1400-acre working farm, including a dairy, market garden, and woodlands uses all of their food and farming practices to educate others. They produce cheddar cheese from their herd of purebred Brown Swiss cows, organic fruits and vegetables in their market garden, pasture-raised lamb, pasture-raised beef and veal, pasture-raised, whey-fed pork, pastured eggs and maple syrup – all served in the Inn and sold across the country.

The Takeaway: The importance of connecting future generations to agriculture and how garden centers can play a part.
Thursday, September 21

8:15am - 9:30am  P&L Study Review and Awards Presentation, Steve Bailey, Steve Bailey Consulting

The results are in for the 2016 P&L Study! And the winners are all of the Group centers who participated in this industry-exclusive benchmarking program. But even if you didn’t participate, you are invited to join us as we discuss the numbers, ratios and trends that can help you move your center to a higher level of success.

With 40 years in the garden center industry, Steve became the Financial Tracking Officer for The Group after selling his own garden center he and his wife Bonnie started in 1984. His main area of interest has always been focused on the financial side of the business and he has developed a number of systems and programs aimed at helping garden centers in The Group get a better grasp on how money moves through their business. One of Steve’s main roles is the management of the Weekly Department Review Report (WDR Report) which tracks the weekly sales of participating Group centers in 25 categories. This industry-exclusive allows garden centers to compare their weekly sales, average sale and customer count with similar centers reporting as Sales & Regional Groups as well as with all reporting centers. Nowhere else in the garden center industry is this service available. Steve’s weekly sales analysis is a wrap-up of sales, promotions and weather impact that is used by Group centers to keep their employees in touch with more than just their immediate surroundings. His remaining free time is spent growing and trimming his Bonsai collection, a hobby he began with his first garden center job 44 years ago.

9:45am - 10:45am  New Administration, New Day for Business... Anticipated Changes in the HR Arena, Jean Seawright, Seawright & Associates

Jean Seawright, our HR Service Provider, will provide you with a glimpse into the crystal ball of HR for the upcoming year — everything from increased immigration enforcement to new marijuana regulations, President Trump’s paid family leave plans, the compensatory time off bill that just passed in the House, and more! Don’t miss this informative session designed to put you on the right track for the coming year!

Since 1987, Jean Seawright has provided trusted advice and consultation to thousands of small, medium, and large organizations, including private, publicly-traded, public, and non-profit businesses. Jean is a frequent speaker at state and national trade associations, a columnist, and the author of numerous articles and publications in the field of human resources, including the popular book The Employment Genie®, an exclusive hiring, coaching, and termination system for businesses. Her consultation has focused on HR-related engagements such as daily HR consultation, regulatory compliance, management training and development, employee handbook development, compensation plan design, internal investigations (including harassment), hiring systems, job descriptions and job profiles, employee opinion surveys, organizational development, and others. She has represented clients before numerous state and federal regulatory agencies and is highly regarded in her ability to lead organizations through dynamic growth and development.

11:15am - 12:00pm  POWERplay, Danny Summers, The Garden Center Group

After three days of intensive learning, stretching our minds and expanding our vision, let’s take a final look at the road we’ve traveled and explore the opportunities to reap the harvest of this Fall Event. No doubt, there will be lots of “takeaways”, so let’s challenge ourselves to set new goals and reach new heights in 2018. And, speaking of 2018, we’ll also talk about where we will be going for The Fall Event 2018!
Location
This year's Fall Event is taking place in Burlington – the largest city in Vermont, known as the Queen City. Burlington has the sophistication of world-class dining, shopping, and entertainment while being nestled between an outdoors enthusiast’s haven – Lake Champlain and the Green Mountains. Go biking or hiking, Board a ferry across scenic Lake Champlain. Visit the Trapp Family Lodge and Brewery in nearby Stowe or Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Factory. Discover great food and shopping on Church Street. No matter where you are in Vermont, you’re sure to have fun. Plan to come early or stay over to see all that Burlington has to offer! For more information on exciting things to see and do around Burlington, visit www.thegardencentergroup.com/the-fall-event-2017 and follow the link to Extend Your Stay.

Hotel
Burlington Hilton
60 Battery St, Burlington, VT 05401
Group Housing Reservations: onPEAK
Group Block: The Garden Center Group Fall Event 2017
Online Reservations: onpeak.com/gardencenter
Phone Reservations: 877-538-3605
Monday - Friday (9am - 5pm EDT)
Special Group Rate: $179 single/double, $199 Lake View
Rate is available 3 days prior and 3 days post event, based on availability is you wish to extend your stay
Reservation Deadline: August 8
Complimentary Airport Shuttle (6am - 10pm; reservations required), Complimentary Bike Rental, Complimentary WiFi, Fitness Center, Pool, 20% Food and Beverage Discount (excluding alcohol), Self Parking $15

Transportation
When planning your trip, obviously, where you start from makes a big difference on how you travel. Therefore, we will provide both air travel and ground travel information. To save money on travel, we recommend you plan well in advance for the best possible savings. The key is to book early!

Air Transportation
Burlington is served by Burlington International Airport (BTV) – 4 mi. from hotel.
The following airlines service Burlington: American Airlines, Delta Airlines, jetBlue, and United Airlines. Burlington can be pricey if you don’t book well in advance. Checking in late May, we found round-trip airfares starting at about $360 from Atlanta and Chicago, Cincinnati from $370, Denver from $510, Portland (OR) from $470. But in comparison, we have seen flights from Atlanta at $800 - $1,200 if you don’t plan ahead.

Ground Transportation
Railway: The Amtrak Vermonter travels from the following cities: Washington, DC, Philadelphia, PA, New York, NY, and Hartford, CT. We checked a round trip business class from New York and it was under $190.
Hotel Courtesy Bus: Complimentary 6am - 10pm; reservations required
Taxi: Ride from airport averages under $10
When planning your arrival, be sure to consider the optional meetings on Sunday afternoon and Monday morning. And be sure to allow time to arrive by 1:00pm on Monday for the Welcome Session – THE session you can’t afford to miss. Also, be sure to allow some extra time to explore Vermont!

The Fall Event Registration
You can register for The Fall Event online at www.thegardencentergroup.com, or complete the enclosed registration form and fax it to 678.909.7771. Registration is $499 per person. Register by August 25.
Cancellations must be in writing and directed to: info@thegardencentergroup.com or fax to 678.909.7771.
Full refund if canceled by August 25. No refunds after August 25.

We hope to see you in Burlington at The Fall Event!
The 17th Annual Fall Event
September 18 - 21, 2017
Burlington, Vermont


Pick a seat. Set the agenda. Choose your topics. This participant-driven, participation-rich event will provide the perfect forum to unleash the collective knowledge and creativity of The Group! Bring your biggest challenges and your boldest ideas... That's what we will focus on — together! Register today to Harness the Power of The Group in Burlington, Vermont.

Learn more about The Fall Event and The Garden Center Group at www.thegardencentergroup.com.