

# Introducing OUR 2020 WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE & ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

*Victoria is pleased to welcome to its pages  
Reeve Lindbergh and Erin Benzakein,  
whose captivating essays and stunning  
floral artistry promise a year brimming  
with inspiration.*

## WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE

Reeve Lindbergh, a daughter of aviator-authors Anne Morrow and Charles A. Lindbergh, is the author of more than two dozen books for children and adults. Her work has appeared in periodicals including *The New York Times Book Review*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Washington Post*. In addition, she serves with a number of local, state, and national organizations—among them the Charles A. and Anne Morrow Lindbergh Foundation, the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, and the Vermont Arts Council. A devoted grandmother, Reeve makes her home on an old farm near St. Johnsbury, Vermont, with her husband, writer Nat Tripp, and an assortment of animals. Her most recent book is *Two Lives*, a collection of essays reflecting on the juxtaposition between her quiet rural lifestyle and the complex history of her famous family.

## ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

Erin Benzakein is the founder of Floret, a flower farm and seed company located in Washington's Skagit Valley. Considered one of the country's most influential farmer-florists, Erin has shaped floral design trends, redefined micro-farming, and inspired others to grow, buy, and share seasonal blooms. An impassioned writer, photographer, and teacher, Erin's popular blog, books, workshops, social media channels, and specialty seeds have profoundly influenced the flower industry. Floret's training has helped growers from nearly fifty countries build thriving flower businesses and fuel a global seasonal-flower movement. Her best-selling book, *Cut Flower Garden*, won the American Horticultural Society's 2018 Book Award, set sales records at Chronicle Books, and continues to inform, inspire, and delight flower lovers around the world. Her forthcoming volume, *A Year in Flowers*, explores creative ways to incorporate homegrown blossoms into everyday bliss.



*Top: Victoria  
Writer-in-Residence,  
Reeve Lindbergh.  
Above: Victoria  
Artist-in-Residence,  
Erin Benzakein.*



## A Nod to GRACE

*As some of the very first perennials to bloom in my cut-flower garden, hellebores are always a joyful sight—a sure sign that spring is on the way.*

TEXT ERIN BENZAKEIN

**O**n a recent morning walk, I spotted a few brave blossoms pushing up through the cold earth: my treasured hellebores. These plants, commonly called *Lenten rose*, are one of the few herbaceous perennials to bloom in the dead of winter. This time of year, you'll often find me in my shade garden, oohing and aahing over the delicate nodding blossoms; and if we have company, I'll make them get down low and experience the magic with me.

Available in a rainbow of muted hues, including eggplant, chartreuse, ivory, wine, crimson, peach, mauve, and even black—and with flowers in frilly doubles, speckled bicolors, delicately brush-marked picotees, and standard five-pointed stars—varieties are both beautiful and incredibly diverse. They are easy to grow, long lived, and require very little maintenance to thrive.

Hellebores like shade and do well where other plants don't, such as under the outer rim of deciduous tree canopies, under larger deciduous shrubs, and on the north side of most buildings. Grow them in rich, organic soil, and for the health of the plant, don't let them sit in waterlogged ground for prolonged periods of time.

In early winter, right before flowers begin to emerge, sprinkle a fresh layer of compost around the base of the plants. This not only provides an extra dose of nutrients and mulch for weed suppression but also forms a dark, clean background that helps set off the blooms nicely.

When plants begin to flower in late winter, remove older, blemished leaves to make sure the floral display is unmarred. This also makes way for new leaves that will appear in the spring. Once you have a collection of established hellebores, you will never have a shortage of plants because they self-seed readily each spring.

Hellebores take a few years to bloom in profusion, so I recommend investing early on to build up a nice cutting garden. You'll be rewarded each successive winter with buckets of the prettiest blossoms.

See Cut Flower Garden by Erin Benzakein for more information.

PHOTOGRAPHY MICHÈLE M. WAITE



*Harvested too early, hellebores rarely flourish in the vase more than a day; waiting a little longer yields lasting bouquets. The key to telling a ripe flower is to check the center, looking for blooms that have dropped their stamens and started to produce seed pods. The more developed the seed pod, the longer the blossom will hold.*

