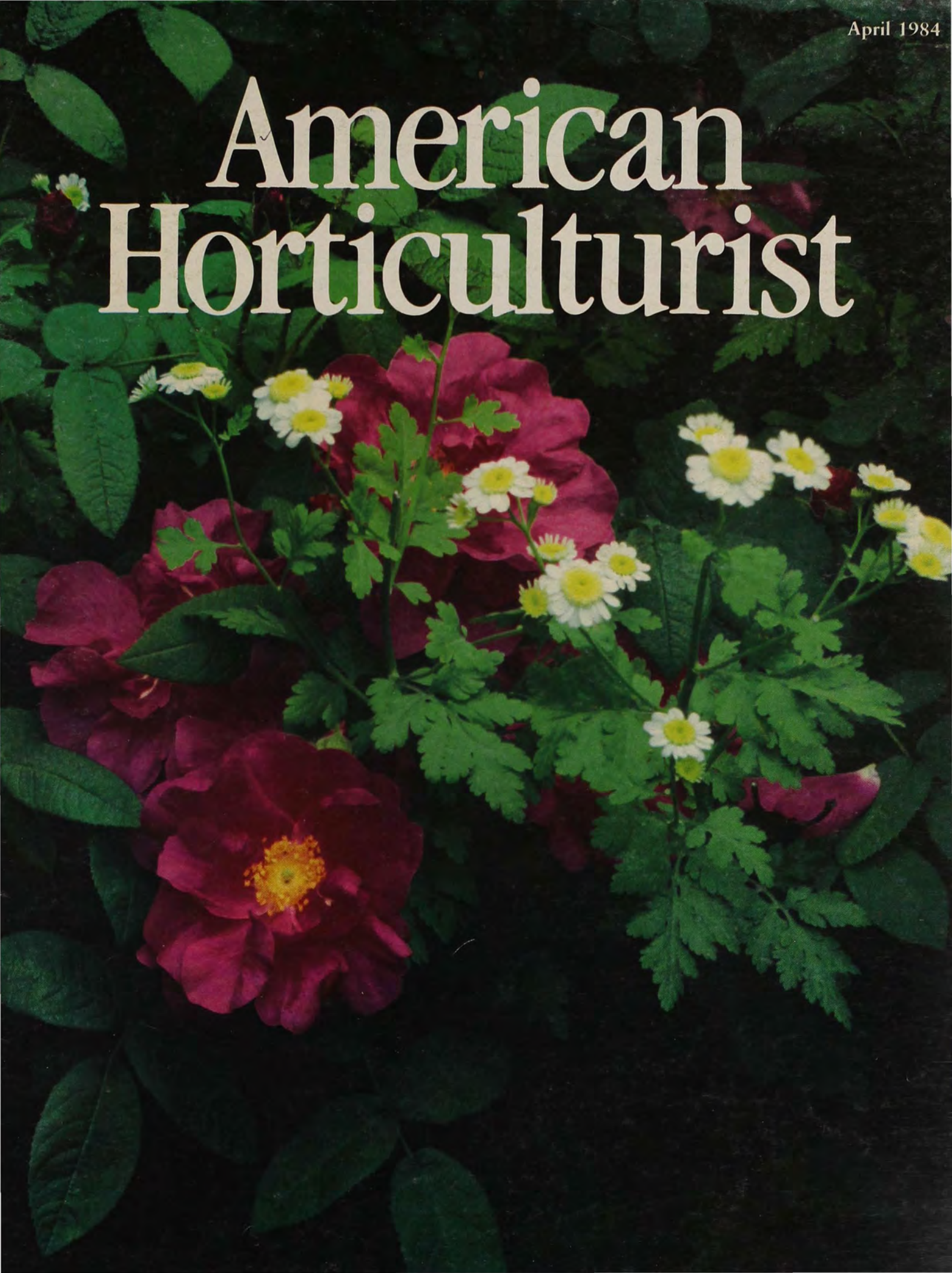


April 1984

American Horticulturist





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Contents



All too often, common plants, such as these Johnny-jump-ups growing amongst lamb's-ears, *Stachys byzantina*, are taken for granted. Frederick McGourty sings the praises of these so-called common plants beginning on page 19.

Photograph by Pamela Harper.

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ON THE COVER: Apothecary rose, *Rosa gallica* 'Officinalis', and feverfew, *Chrysanthemum parthenium*, bloom together in a beautiful cottage garden built around the 250-year-old home of Albert and Mildred Van Vlack in northeastern Connecticut. To join writer/photographer Pamela Harper for a tour of this remarkable garden, turn to page 14.

ERRATA: The photograph of the tall palms on page 29 of the December issue was incorrectly attributed to Maire Simington; the photo was taken by Joseph Shirley. In the same issue, Hillel Burger is the photographer responsible for the stunning pictures of the glass flowers that appeared courtesy of E. P. Dutton.

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When You Need To Know

We gardeners are an inquisitive lot. When we see a new plant in a public or private garden, we hunt for a label or ask a gardener working nearby. When our prized roses mysteriously fail to bloom, we share our misery with similarly afflicted neighbors. A new petunia, parsnip or philodendron beckons us, and we anticipate its appearance in full-color splendor in this year's catalogues. And often we find ourselves asking, "Who can answer my questions?"

Members of the American Horticultural Society—all 40,000 of us—have a place to turn when questions arise. As coordinator of the Gardeners' Information Service, I await your questions on horticulture and related areas. Since I began working at AHS last May, I have answered 750 letters, handled 400 phone calls and helped many visitors to River Farm with their questions. But the total served represents a very small percentage of our membership. A recent membership survey indicates that 69 percent of you like the idea of the Gardeners' Information Service. Obviously, all 69 percent of you aren't availing yourselves of this service. (This is fortunate in one respect: it would be difficult for me to answer all of the questions of some 28,000 members!)

I would like to explain the Service to you briefly. All of your letters are separated into two categories: Gardeners' Information Service and Plants Wanted, our increasingly popular plant search column that appears in *American Horticulturist* News Edition. I try to reply to your questions promptly and in the order received, although some do take longer to research and answer than others. Occasionally, some of you request printed information, which, unfortunately, we do not always have available. Others ask questions about plants that are unfamiliar to me. As you might imagine, the question list encompasses virtually every category in the field.

Our invitation to membership includes, among other benefits, expert answers to your gardening questions. However, I don't pretend to be an expert in every aspect of horticulture. If I cannot answer your ques-

tion(s) as thoroughly as I would like, I refer you to others more knowledgeable than myself. For example, I will direct you to the American Rose Society, which maintains an excellent cadre of consulting rosarians, when your questions on roses are beyond my ken. Specialized questions on hydroponics, education, tissue culture, endangered wildflower species, Japanese gardens and a hundred other fields all deserve answers from experts. Write to me, and I will gladly locate and refer you to these specialists, many of whose names are included in our *North American Horticulture: A Reference Guide*, the best horticultural reference book published in this country.

We use a similar procedure to handle your Plants Wanted requests. If I cannot locate a source in our catalogue files, I often suggest the name of a nursery that offers related plants, or I will provide the name of a society or institution that specializes in that particular plant. Plants that are particularly hard to locate will be listed in the "Plants Wanted" column of the newsletter.

In any case, all of your questions will receive a reply, be it a direct answer, a form letter or a suggestion concerning where to look. I encourage you to use this service; it's there for your benefit.

Here are a few suggestions to help you obtain a prompt answer to your gardening questions:

1. If your question relates to a pest or disease, first contact your County Agent. (The phone number usually appears under state or county listings in the telephone directory.) The excellent Extension Service system is your first line of defense. In addition to the advice of professional pathologists and others trained in the culture of plants in your state, Extension Services can often provide you with free or reasonably priced publications. Local botanical gardens, garden centers and other area horticultural institutions may also be able to answer your question quickly with just a phone call, and you won't need to wait for a reply by mail. If you don't know which institutions are near you, write to

me, and I'll supply you with names and addresses. (Include your question with your information request; I may be able to answer it.)

2. If possible, supply both the common and scientific names of your plant in question. Common names are notoriously ambiguous; tiger lily might be *Hemerocallis fulva* or *Lilium tigrinum*, for example.

3. If your question relates to a source for a plant, again provide the common and scientific names (if known) and a brief description of the plant. Also, please tell me the history of your search: where did you originally see it?; where have you looked for your plant?; how long have you searched? Supplying these facts may save a great deal of time while you await a source for your special plant.

4. Please indicate that you are a member of the Society. As a nationally known organization in the field of horticulture, we receive inquiries from many quarters. While we try to answer their questions as well, we make every effort to give preferential treatment to you, our members. Also, this will enable us to keep better records on this service to our members.

As the Gardeners' Information Service develops, I plan to add more resources, including extensive bibliographies on many topics, local and national speakers' bureaus and listings of regional horticultural information sources. We also hope to computerize our plant catalogue files; eventually, plant sources will be available at the touch of a few keys. Won't you help in this expansion? Please send me your comments and suggestions regarding the Gardeners' Information Service and Plants Wanted. I look forward to strengthening our ties with all of you gardeners out there. The more we communicate with each other, the more we can learn from each other.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Raymond J. Rogers

—Raymond J. Rogers
Gardeners' Information Service

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ABOVE: *Codiaeum variegatum*, the florist's croton, is grown for its stunning foliage; its small flowers are inconspicuous.
ABOVE RIGHT: Poinsettia, *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, provides an excellent example of the unique floral structure of the genus.
RIGHT: *Euphorbia fulgens*, commonly called scarlet-plume, is a small shrub from Mexico.

Photographs by Pamela Harper

The Spurge Family

Some of the most unlikely strange relatives are to be found among the spurges, which are members of the Euphorbiaceae, a family of cosmopolitan distribution and great economic importance. Here we encounter poinsettia, castor-oil plant, florists' croton, redbird cactus, tapioca and para rubber, all under one botanical roof. The euphorbia family is one of the four or five largest flowering plant families (ranking after the Compositae, Orchidaceae and Leguminosae, and about equal to the Gramineae), claiming about 7,000 species organized into about 300 genera. It is a family native in all regions where vegetation occurs except the Arctic. Although the euphorbias are chiefly tropical in distribution, there are some local concentrations in other regions. In America, most members of this family are found in the warm southern parts of the



United States; still more occur in Mexico and South America. Farther north, the family is better represented in the eastern and middle western areas of the United States than on the Pacific Coast.

The name spurge relates directly to the purgative properties of the juices of many species of Euphorbiaceae. A common feature in the family is milky sap (latex), which, in some species, is a skin irritant or causes poisoning if ingested in quantity. The seeds and raw roots of certain species are very toxic.

Euphorbiaceae leaves are simple or, if compound, palmately divided. They are usually alternate on the stem but sometimes opposite or whorled. Some species with spiny, jointed stems are cactus-like. In these and other succulent sorts, the leaves are often few in number, greatly reduced in size, or vestigial. In such kinds, the



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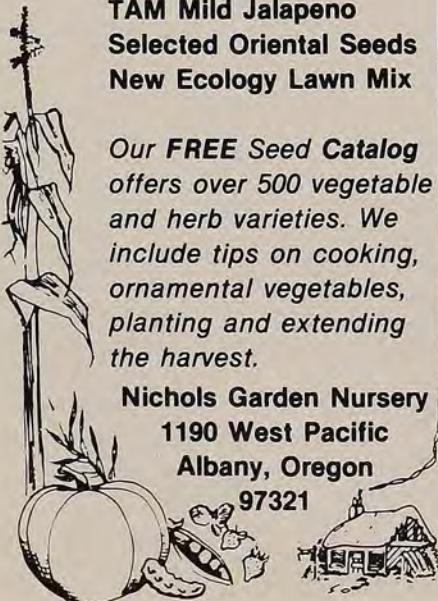
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STRANGE RELATIVES

stems—green, gray-green or blue-green in color—perform the functions of photosynthesis.

Flower structure varies greatly from genus to genus, with some highly specialized and complicated types. Flowers usually have five perianth segments (petals and sepals). Some have petals; in others, petals and sepals are lacking altogether. Characteristic of some kinds is a close aggregate of tiny, simple flowers in conjunction with bracts (modified leaves), glands and petal-like appendages, which together produce an effect akin to a true flower. Glands, which are a noteworthy feature of the family, are generally associated with the flowers. Fruit is a capsule, and, rarely, a berry.

The spurge family takes its botanical name from its largest genus, *Euphorbia*, which consists of more than 2,000 of the 7,000 species in the entire family. The name is believed to be derived from that of Euphorbos, physician to King Juba of Mauritania, a district of Africa in Roman times.

The members of this remarkable genus have a worldwide distribution; they are abundant in the tropics and subtropics, and are among the most common Old World desert succulents. Many species are native to the United States; certain others from Africa and Europe have become naturalized in the United States and Canada.

The diversity among euphorbias is phenomenal. There are tree euphorbias of massive size and cactus-like appearance. Other types include shrubby, succulent, branching plants of varying stature. Some kinds are under a foot tall with widely varying growth habits. The species from dry places are often so like members of the cactus family, Cactaceae, that it is difficult to tell them apart when they are not in bloom. A simple test shows the difference: a pinprick on the euphorbia stem will produce a trickle of its characteristic white, milky, often poisonous latex, whereas a cut cactus stem is bright green and juicy.

The great, spiny giant euphorbias of the South African veldt are the counterparts of cacti in America. The euphorbias and cacti illustrate the biological phenomenon of convergent evolution, in which unrelated groups of organisms subject to the same environmental factors gradually develop similar structures.

The common characteristic of all *Euphorbia* species, and one of their chief taxonomic features, is the complex floral arrangement called a cyathium, which means cup. This small structure bears a number

of brightly colored glands around its rim. Within are numerous male flowers surrounding a single, central female flower. There may be 21 very small flowers in one cyathium. Beneath are whorls or spirals of small leaves or bracts; the whole aggregate appears to be a single flower. (The unique flower structure of the euphorbias can be most easily understood by close examination of a poinsettia bloom.) Cross-pollination is effected by a species of fly attracted by the copious, sweet-scented nectar exuded by the glands. The fruit is a three-lobed capsule from which seeds are discharged explosively when ripe.

Leaders in horticultural popularity are poinsettia, crown-of-thorns, scarlet-plume and snow-on-the-mountain, as well as living-baseball and other cactus-like species.

Poinsettia, *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, is best known. Bright red, pink or white petal-like bracts surround the true flowers, which are small and yellow. The poinsettia, which is native to Central America and tropical Mexico, was introduced to cultivation in the United States by our ambassador to Mexico in 1828. In Zone 9 it is grown out-of-doors in hedges or as a specimen plant. It is known throughout our country as the flower of the Christmas season, when it is produced in great numbers for the florists' trade. Many improved cultivars have been developed for this ornamental use.

Crown-of-thorns, *E. milii*, is commonly grown in the greenhouse or as a house plant in the North. Where it is hardy (Zone 10), it is often used as a flowering hedge. This very thorny plant from Madagascar is an upright, branching bush, its bright red or yellow blossoms appearing throughout the year. Cultivars having larger flower size have become popular over the years.

Scarlet-plume, *E. fulgens*, is entirely different in appearance from poinsettia and crown-of-thorns. It is a handsome, willowy, branching Mexican shrub with oblong, alternate leaves and clusters of small, orange-scarlet flowers along the length of each stem. It is a spectacular ornamental conservatory plant.

Leaves and bracts margined in white make snow-on-the-mountain, *E. marginata*, a favorite temperate zone garden plant. It is native to the eastern United States; its sap is sometimes an irritant to skin.

A number of other annual or perennial leafy garden spurges have distinct features, in leaf color or shape, or in the profusion and color of bracts, that make them at-

tractive for garden use in temperate zone gardens. Some others are weeds. The European *E. lathyris*, called caper spurge, bears fruit resembling the flower buds of caper, *Capparis spinosa*, the popular condiment. These fruits are not edible; in fact, they may be toxic if eaten. Grown as an oddity for its columnar form and whorled blue-green leaves, *E. lathyris* is thought by some to dispel moles and is therefore known as mole plant.

Some of the juicy, fleshy, rather thick succulents are treasured for large and attractive flowers. Occasionally, however, we give prominence to a plant because of its unusual form. One such plant is *E. obesa*, living-baseball, a rotund, spineless, colorful succulent from South Africa. The neat, compact, symmetrical plants usually have eight (sometimes seven to 10) angled ridges and are gray-green, with numerous transverse purple bands formed of fine lines. The surface is marked with narrow grooves. Circular flowering "eyes" are arranged in rows down the center of each ridge. A young, globose plant looks rather like a baseball covered with plaid material gathered at the top. It is necessary to have both male and female plants to produce seed.

E. obesa is just one among innumerable succulent and cactus-like euphorbias esteemed by collectors. In *The Illustrated Reference on Cacti & Other Succulents*, Vol. I, Edgar Lamb writes of this species, "This is perhaps the finest *Euphorbia* yet known; its colouring of purple, green, red, mauve, etc., gives it the appearance of a very fine Tartan fabric."

The great diversity of *Euphorbia* species is well described and illustrated in black and white photographs in the *New York Botanical Garden Illustrated Encyclopedia of Horticulture*. Lamb's volumes on cacti and other succulents are also a source of pictures and of cultural notes as well. Besides the many species that are of horticultural interest, others are commercially important.

While the *Euphorbia* species account for the majority of species within the Euphorbiaceae (and only a few are highlighted here), a number of other genera of the family are familiar and popular garden and greenhouse plants.

Acalypha species, sometimes called copperleaf, are normally grown for their bright foliage effects. They are mostly conservatory ornamentals but are used extensively for hedges and lawn specimens in the far South. *A. wilkesiana*, commonly called

match-me-if-you-can, produces leaves no two of which are identically patterned. Many cultivars with leaves that combine red, crimson, bronze or creamy white can be seen in landscapes of south Florida and the American tropics, or, less frequently, in southern California.

Bronze-green leaves with red veins distinguish *A. hispida*, chenille copperleaf. This leading horticultural species is widely grown,

indoors or out, for the display of long, pendulous, blood-red spikes of female flowers. A creamy white cultivar, 'Alba', is also known. Flowers of copperleaves other than *A. hispida* are inconspicuous.

Pedilanthus species are grown as ornamentals in warm climates. Of the 30-odd species in the genus, redbird cactus or devil's-backbone, *P. tithymaloides*, is best known. Several subspecies or cultivars are



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STRANGE RELATIVES

available; one is 'Variegatus', its green leaves variegated white and red.

Codiaeum is the "croton" of florists; it is also known as variegated laurel. The cultivated plants belong to one widely variable species, *C. variegatum*, of which there are over a hundred named forms. The name *codiaeum* comes from the Greek word for head, an allusion to the use of the plant's leaves for wreaths. These very ornamental leaves are sometimes lobed and variously marked, streaked, blotched or banded with white, red and yellow. Besides the color variations, some plants have leaves that are finely cut, curled or twisted in a spiral. Inconspicuous flowers are borne on a drooping inflorescence, male on one plant, female on another. *Codiaeums* are native to the Malay peninsula and Pacific Islands. In the United States, they are extensively grown as ornamental garden shrubs or in patio tubs in the far South and as tub or pot plants indoors.

Phyllanthus epiphyllanthus is a striking conservatory plant of commanding appearance. Its red-orange, petalless flowers are borne along the margins of leaf-like, flattened branches called cladophylls, which function as leaves. (The name *phyllanthus* means flowers on leaves.) *P. X elongatus* (*P. arbuscula* X *P. epiphyllanthus*) is especially floriferous. *P. acidus*, Otaheite gooseberry, a 30-foot Asian tree, is naturalized in Florida and the West Indies; this species and *P. emblica* are grown in warm climates for their edible fruit. Several hundred species occur naturally in the tropics and subtropics of both the eastern and western hemispheres.

Ricinus communis, castor-oil plant or castor bean, is a tropical plant of economic importance. It is widely grown as an ornamental garden annual in temperate zones for the exotic foliage effects provided by its large, shining green or coppery leaves. Small flowers in branched clusters—males borne below and females above, toward the apex of the tall plant—result in a cluster of bristly seed pods that are also ornamental.

A future column will focus on those members of the Euphorbiaceae that are of chiefly economic importance, further revealing the wide variety of strange relatives in this remarkable family. ♀

—Jane Steffey

Jane Steffey recently retired as the Society's Horticultural Advisor. She is now an active AHS volunteer and serves as Editorial Advisor to *American Horticulturist*.

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Book Reviews

GARDENS TO VISIT

STATELY GARDENS OF BRITAIN.
Thomas Hinde. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. New York, New York. 1983. 192 pages; hardcover, \$29.95. AHS discount price, \$28.45 including postage and handling.

GARDENS OF FRANCE.
Anita Pereire and Gabrielle Van Zuylen. Harmony Books. New York, New York. 1983. 223 pages; hardcover, \$40.00. AHS discount price, \$33.50 including postage and handling.

THE GARDENS OF CHINA: HISTORY, ART AND MEANING.
Edwin T. Morris. Charles Scribner's Sons. New York, New York. 1983. 273 pages; hardcover, \$37.50. AHS discount price, \$31.50 including postage and handling.

For those fortunate enough to travel, this is the time of year to visit gardens. Each of these books serves as a guide to some of the finest gardens of their respective countries, in addition to providing a history of gardening in each country.

Stately Gardens of Britain tells the story of 24 of Britain's best gardens, from their history to current maintenance and plans for the future. Each description is accompanied by a garden plan and colored photographs of some of the gardens' more outstanding features. An appendix gives visitors' information for each garden and lists other gardens worth visiting throughout England, Wales and Scotland.

Gardens of France deals with 32 of France's most outstanding gardens. Unlike the British gardens covered in the first book, many of these intriguing French gardens are private. Unfortunately, no mention is made of the public or private status of the gardens described, and I consider this a serious shortcoming of this book. Nevertheless, the beautiful presentation of a wide variety of gardens in many styles makes one want to tour the French countryside and experience these gardens firsthand.

Gardens of China is yet another guide to outstanding gardens in a particular country—in this case, China. However, this



book presents a more formal study of garden history than the other two books. The individual British and French gardens, some of which may have had long histories and some of which are modern, are all described in terms of their contemporary development. The Chinese gardens, on the other hand, are all essentially historical. Two final chapters, however, treat Chinese gardens from a contemporary perspective. If you are a gardener planning to travel to China, this is a book you'll want to read before you go.

AN IRISH FLORILEGIUM.
Wendy Walsh (watercolor paintings), Charles Nelson (notes on the plates) and Isabel Ross (introduction). Thames and Hudson. New York, New York. 1983. 224 pages; hardcover, \$125.00. AHS discount price, \$111.00 including postage and handling.

This sumptuous work is a return to the tradition of the fine flower book. Forty-eight beautiful plates illustrate a broad selection of outstanding plants growing in Ireland today. Some are natives, while many are introduced. A commentary for each plant outlines the history of the plant in Ireland and provides cultural information

where applicable. The introduction gives a brief history of botany and horticulture in Ireland and also discusses the influence of Irish botanists and horticulturists on plants found in American gardens. For the collector of fine gardening books, this is a worthwhile addition to the library both for its content and for its presentation.

ORTHO'S COMPLETE GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL GARDENING.
Barbara Ferguson (editor). Ortho Books. San Francisco, California. 1983. 504 pages; hardcover, \$29.95. AHS discount price, \$24.00 including postage and handling.

This book would be the first on my list of recommendations for the new gardener. Unlike the other Ortho books, which present do-it-yourself information in great detail, this is a well-written and beautifully presented work on basic gardening principles. All aspects of gardening are included, and the chapters present the usual range of annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs, vegetables, house plants and so forth. The book stresses the importance of understanding each type of plant and planning for its proper use in the garden. The rose chapter is a good example: It tells you what

roses are, how they fit into the garden, what the various classes mean in terms of growth and flowering, and how to care for them. It doesn't mention a single cultivar name, but once you have read this chapter, you'll know what to look for when you are selecting your cultivars in the catalogue or the nursery. The last half of the book presents brief descriptions and concise cultural instructions for many of the more popular garden plants.

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PEST CONTROL WITH NATURE'S CHEMICALS.

Elroy L. Rice. University of Oklahoma Press. Norman, Oklahoma. 1983. 226 pages; hardcover, \$28.50. AHS discount price, \$26.50 including postage and handling.

The subject of natural pest control has prompted many very emotional discussions. In this book Professor Rice presents a very straightforward and objective report on the many ways in which plants and animals act upon each other through chemicals that they naturally produce. The author discusses both the results of modern laboratory experiments and the long-standing agricultural practices of farmers all over the world in relation to pest control. This is a scientifically impressive treatment aimed at the gardener and the farmer as well as the biologist.

GROWING BULBS.

Martyn Rix. Timber Press. Portland, Oregon. 1983. 209 pages; hardcover, \$18.95. AHS discount price, \$17.65 including postage and handling.

Growing Bulbs is a book for the gardener with an inquisitive mind. The subject is bulbous plants—what they are, how they grow and where they originated; the cultural requirements of these interesting plants are only of secondary importance. The chapter on "Bulb-Growing Areas of the World" is particularly fascinating if you have an interest in collecting bulbs yourself. A lengthy appendix lists all of the



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BOOK REVIEWS

horticulturally important bulbous genera, including a brief description of each genus, the numbers and origins of the species, and a good set of references to the literature.

THE SMALL GARDEN.

John Brookes. Van Nostrand Reinhold Company. New York, New York. 1978. 256 pages; softcover (paperback edition 1983), \$13.50. AHS discount price, \$11.89 including postage and handling.

This book is a fine source of design ideas for the garden. Many photographs and garden plans illustrate a wide variety of small gardens in the United States and Europe. *The Small Garden* provides an excellent opportunity to study other gardens in relation to your own, and the many details of garden design are a rich source of ideas to adapt to your own needs. Included is a very helpful climatic zone map that compares the Arnold Arboretum plant hardiness map to the countries of Europe.

PALMS.

Alec Blombery and Tony Rodd. Angus and Robertson Publishers. London, England. 1982. 199 pages; hardcover, \$24.95. AHS discount price, \$21.50 including postage and handling.

This beautifully produced work about palms for the garden and their use in the landscape is illustrated almost entirely with colored photographs and would look right at home on the coffee table. A useful appendix lists species that will grow in various climates and under special conditions. *Palms* is a must for the palm collector and an inspiration for the gardener in the more favored climates where palms will grow.

THE LIVES OF PLANTS.

Doris M. Stone. Charles Scribner's Sons. New York, New York. 1983. 304 pages; hardcover, \$15.95. AHS discount price, \$14.25 including postage and handling.

This book about "how plants work" provides a good background on botany for the non-botanist. The author covers a broad range of subjects including ecology, physiology and taxonomy, and clearly explains them in everyday language. She also provides simple experiments you can perform in your own home. As a plain-talk introduction to botany, this book is unique. ☉

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A New England

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY PAMELA HARPER

The old house stands by the side of the road, as it has done for nearly 250 years. The Van Vlack's have lived here for half a century, but local folk still know the cottage as "the old Hawley Place." Early records were burned, but the cedar-shingled cottage in the saltbox style (which was used to dodge the Crown tax on two-story buildings) is believed to have been built about 1738. The date 1766 is engraved on the front door latch. Another link with Colonial days is evident in the pine paneling, from which nine coats of paint were removed; it is all less than two feet in width, except for one cracked plank. At the time of construction, any sound board of greater width was claimed by England for building ships.

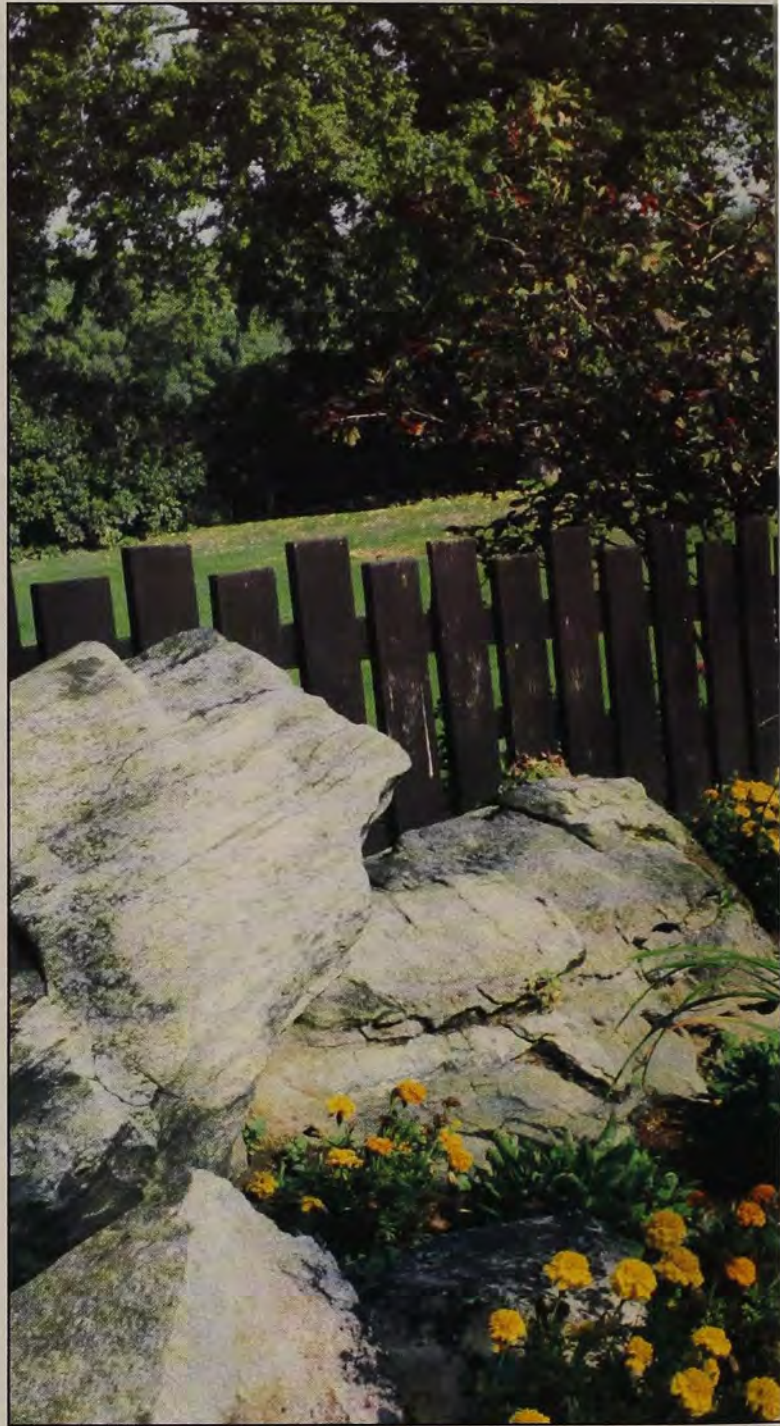
When Albert and Mildred Van Vlack first saw the derelict cottage in 1932, it looked forlorn. No one had lived there for 18 years, the outside timbers had rotted away and bushes had grown up through floors that now display rugs hooked by Mr. Van Vlack during the long winters of northeastern Connecticut. There was no electricity, and water had to be carried from a spring across the road. They bought the house, with six-tenths of an acre, for \$800. Property tax that first year was \$12. Those were "the good old days," reflects Mr. Van Vlack, son of a Dutch farmer from New York state, who at the time was earning \$8.00 a week as a clerk. He has many a story to relate about the house and its furnishings. Six dozen eggs were bartered for an antique schoolhouse desk—"just junk then," he says.

The cottage, trimmed in brown-stained redwood clapboard, stands foursquare to the little-traveled road. Facing south, it is bounded by rocky fields with wooded slopes beyond. Deer, racoons and chipmunks are frequent visitors, and robins—drunk from gorging on the berries from junipers that spatter surrounding fields—are a familiar sight. The Van Vlack's own another seven acres across the road, protecting their view, and there, behind an old stone wall, they have made a pond surrounded by mown grass that recedes into woodland.

A brown-stained picket fence with a castellated top frames the garden, keeps out cows and serves as a hitching post for some tall perennials in need of staking. Candytuft, snowy in spring, hems the outside of the fence, and in summer clematis cascade over it, their roots in shade and flowers in sun—exactly what they like. A strip of mown grass beyond the fence lessens damage from salt washed from the road. Along the eastern boundary, a spring-fed brook runs down to the Whiting River. Once, after seven inches of rain had fallen in two hours, the brook carried away part of the fence. Mr. Van Vlack recalls with satisfaction how he set off in pursuit and recovered most of it.

The garden is divided more or less in half, the front for flowers,

Sunny yellow and orange marigolds, given to the Van Vlack's as gifts, wink at passers-by from outside the brown-stained picket fence that borders the garden.



the back for herbs and vegetables. At first, true to cottage garden tradition, little was bought. Later, some plants were purchased, usually those seen in the gardens of other restored houses, among them Madonna lilies. Many of the plants were foundlings from abandoned gardens or gifts from friends, sometimes just a slip but more often a sizeable clump; others were grown from seed. Cabbage roses have been in the garden at least 150 years. Lilacs

Cottage Garden



were dug from an abandoned homestead along the road, and so was the intensely fragrant apothecary rose now intermingled with self-sown feverfew. A path leads, in the old pre-automobile way, from road to front door, through a Williamsburg-style gate with ball and chain closure. The gentian-blue flowers of creeping plumbago spread over the old door slab, which was broken in two when unearthed but pieced together again.

Mrs. Van Vlack speaks of the snowy day when they first saw the old house: "Snow helped sell us the place, because it covered a potato patch we thought was level ground." Making virtue out of necessity, the potato patch is now an undulating lawn ("we just mowed what was there"), which is more appealing in this setting than one billiard-table flat. In the northwest corner behind the lawn, blue and white, peach-leaved bellflower has naturalized in a small thicket that hides the garden shed. This old favorite has been known in gardens since the 16th century.

Perennials, the quintessence of a cottage garden, have been out of vogue in recent years, but not with the Van Vlack. Now that flowers are fashionable again, this garden is one of rather few show-and-tell examples of how to grow them well. Long borders following the fence line to the south and west originally came together a bit like homemade soup—not according to a recipe, but starting with what needed "using up," then pausing to savor and consider before making additions. "So much was given," says Mrs. Van Vlack, and so by happenstance she followed two sound guidelines for making pleasing borders: use big groupings of one kind, and repeat the same plant in another part of the border. There are no clashing colors in the scheme, which began with pink 'American Pillar' roses and blue delphiniums given by a lady for whom Mr. Van Vlack worked for 50¢ a day. The offspring of those first plants are in the garden still, sometimes seeming frozen to death but always coming back. Pink, blue, gray and white remains the color scheme for the south border. Bright pink yarrow with plate-like heads is flanked by phlox of softer pink, the white spires of a veronica aptly called 'Icicle', and bronze-crowned, pink-rimmed coneflowers that look like garden party hats. The shape and color of delphiniums are repeated on a smaller scale by spikes of blue veronica, and next to these is a cloud of bright pink coralbells. Also present are claret-colored bee balm, fragrant pinks, the brilliant magenta flowers of rose campion calmed by their own gray-felted leaves, and ferny-leaved white dropwort with sprays of double flowers like tiny roses.

Mrs. Van Vlack doesn't like yellow with pink, and there is no yellow in the south border. In the west border yellow has replaced most of the pink, but the beloved old 'Mary Wallace' roses still swathe the fence in pink for a short while in early summer. When the rotted window frames of the cottage were replaced, much of the old glass was saved. Through these old, wavy panes the west border, bright with tulips in spring, has the dreamy, impressionistic look of a painting. In late spring, creamy roses pick up the color of wavy-leaved plantain lilies, a subtle combination given zest by the decisive purplish red of a hardy geranium. Lady's-mantle is grown mainly for its pleated, dew-bedizened leaves. (The botanical name, *Alchemilla*, bespeaks the use of this dew by alchemists in preparing the Philosopher's Stone.) The foamy, chartreuse flowers provide pleasing contrast, in form, to the red and yellow wheels of *Gaillardia*, a sun-loving perennial that is not very long lived in northern gardens but is easily grown from seed.

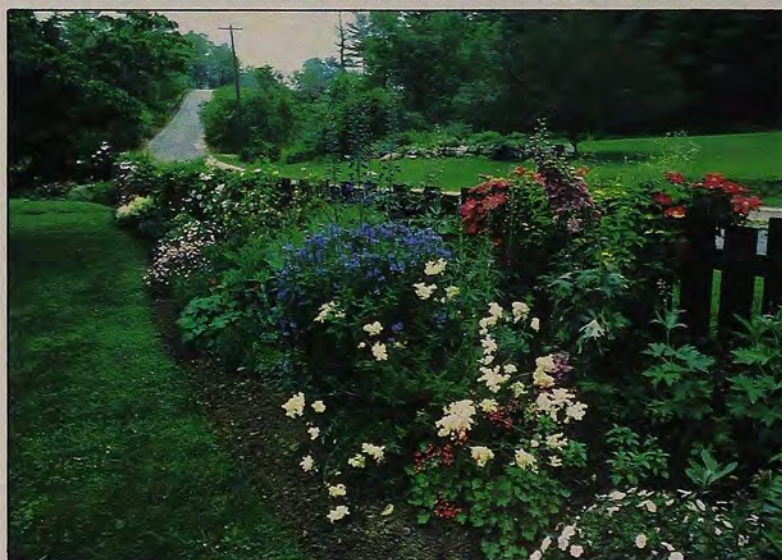
Then comes yellow yarrow, grouped with white *Phlox* and the blue balloon flower, whose inflated buds one's fingers itch to pop. In summer the steel blue, chain-mace spheres of globe

thistle rise above the fence, and at the front of the border catmint tumbles over the lawn. There are white Shasta daisies, blue European meadow geraniums, the dark blue North American knapweed or mountain bluet, and the velvety leaves of lamb's-ears. The season draws to a close with great patches of orange and yellow *Helenium*, or sneezeweed. Hardpan clay lies two feet down, and this keeps the soil moist—heleniums like that.

Plants in old cottage gardens probably got the dregs from the teapot, and quite likely the chamber pot as well, but they weren't

Botanical Names for Cottage Flowers

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Apothecary rose | <i>Rosa gallica</i> 'Officinalis' |
| Auriculas | <i>Primula auricula</i> |
| Balloon flower | <i>Platycodon grandiflorus</i> |
| Bee balm | <i>Monarda</i> hybrids of <i>M. fistulosa</i> and <i>M. didyma</i> |
| Bible-leaf or Costmary | <i>Chrysanthemum balsamita</i> |
| Cabbage roses | <i>Rosa centifolia</i> |
| Calla lily | <i>Zantedeschia elliottiana</i> |
| Candytuft | <i>Iberis sempervirens</i> |
| Catmint | <i>Nepeta faassenii</i> |
| Coneflowers | <i>Echinacea purpurea</i> (often catalogued as <i>Rudbeckia purpurea</i>) |
| Coralbells | <i>Heuchera sanguinea</i> |
| Dropwort | <i>Filipendula vulgaris</i> |
| European meadow geraniums | <i>Geranium pratense</i> |
| Feverfew | <i>Chrysanthemum parthenium</i> |
| Globe thistle | <i>Echinops</i> sp. |
| Golden-glow | <i>Rudbeckia laciniata</i> 'Hortensia' |
| Hardy geranium | <i>Geranium sanguineum</i> |
| Knapweed | <i>Centaurea montana</i> |
| Lady's-mantle | <i>Alchemilla mollis</i> |
| Lambs'-ears | <i>Stachys byzantina</i> |
| Lavender | <i>Lavandula</i> sp. |
| Lilacs | <i>Syringa vulgaris</i> |
| Lungwort | <i>Pulmonaria officinalis</i> |
| Mugwort | <i>Artemisia vulgaris</i> |
| Peach-leaved bellflower | <i>Campanula persicifolia</i> |
| Pinks | <i>Dianthus</i> sp. |
| Plantain lilies | <i>Hosta</i> sp. |
| Plumbago | <i>Ceratostigma plumbaginoides</i> |
| Rose campion | <i>Lychnis coronaria</i> |
| Shasta daisies | <i>Chrysanthemum X superbum</i> |
| Southernwood | <i>Artemisia abrotanum</i> |
| Tansy | <i>Tanacetum vulgare</i> |
| Tarragon | <i>Artemisia dracunculus</i> |
| Thyme | <i>Thymus</i> sp. |
| Veronica 'Icicle' | <i>Veronica incana</i> , <i>V. teucrium</i> |
| Wormwood | <i>Artemisia absinthium</i> |
| Yarrow | Pink: <i>Achillea millefolium</i> 'Roseum' Yellow: <i>A. millefolium</i> 'Coronation Gold' |



ABOVE: A pink and white perennial border lines the undulating lawn that was once a potato patch. BELOW: Clematis, delphiniums, dropwort, veronics, coralbells and pink yarrow line the roadside.

pampered. They had to be robust; that's why they've been around for so long. Some are almost too eager. The two borders in this garden are separated by a king-size bolster of gray *Artemisia* 'Silver King' billowing over, under and around a bench, placed across the corner to "hide the mess behind." The ploy must have worked, for the garden always looks spick-and-span. The artemisia has to be curbed each year, and a bright pink yarrow—admired by the Van Vlacks and given to them with the warning that it tends to be invasive—must also be watched.

Cottagers' wives traditionally cherished an odd tender plant or two, and so does Mrs. Van Vlack. To the east of the house, a short graveled drive runs to the garage and a small attached greenhouse. In the narrow bed to the right there's an exotic touch in late spring provided by bright yellow calla lilies, which are wintered indoors. Her husband's approach is more practical, summed up in a conversation about the septic tank, of such a large size that it never needs pumping out. Why so big? "I had a big hole to fill," he says. The raised bed to the left of the drive came about for a similar reason. All the old mortar and rubble from the house was dumped here during restoration, and "it



Rosa gallica 'Officinalis', commonly called apothecary rose, growing with *Chrysanthemum parthenium*, or feverfew.

was easier to cover it up than to move it." A ribbon of wine-red, yellow-eyed auriculas runs along the base of the lichen-covered, stone retaining wall—all from divisions of just one purchased plant. Stone steps go up from here to the paved rear terrace, where annuals and such house plants as fuchsias and ivy-leaf geraniums swing in hanging baskets from the boughs of a shade tree in summer.

Herbs, with all their historic associations, are a natural choice for the gardens of old houses. Most often they are grown in beds of geometric shape, but this herb garden, as befits the cottage, is informal. "Every stone has my fingerprints on it," says Mr. Van Vlack, looking down on the herbs tucked between rocks on the bank sloping down from the terrace. Once there was grass here, but "I'd no intention of cutting it," says Mrs. Van Vlack, "and I refused," adds her husband. The idea for the herb garden came from a similar garden displayed at the nearby Berkshire Garden Center.

Some of the herbs are for culinary use, some for fragrance, but most are "more for to please the eye than either the nose or the belly," as it was put in the days when this was a revolutionary idea. The colors are calming, with a lot of gray, but there's also the artist's touch in an occasional spot of bright color. There are several kinds of onion: chives, of course, as pretty as they are useful; the early-flowering, yellow *Allium moly*; and the late-flowering, mauve *A. senescens* var. *glaucum* that has no common name (old gray onion might do), its blue-gray leaves held in almost horizontal swirls. There's fragrance from pinks, lavender and thyme creeping along cracks and cranies, as well as from the mint-scented foliage (when squeezed in the fingers) of Bible-leaf, so called because the long, flat leaves were often used as bookmarks in Bibles.

The powers ascribed to herbs are many and varied and often highly imaginative; artemisias such as tarragon, southernwood, wormwood and mugwort have been credited with just about everything from chasing away fleas and warding off lightning to cheering the lovelorn and restoring hair to balding heads. ("They don't all work," says Mr. Van Vlack.) Of the several artemisias in this garden, the prettiest is 'Silver Mound'. This latecomer to gardens is a silvery mound of lacy leaves grown for their beauty alone. Tucked under a step is lungwort, an

example of a plant whose use was once dictated by the Doctrine of Signatures, in which 16th- and 17th-century physicians put great faith, and which was still given some credence at the time this old house was built. Because lungwort's mottled leaves were thought to resemble diseased lungs, it was used for treating pulmonary disorders; the scientific name is *Pulmonaria*. When this cottage was young, tansy might have been grown for use in spring tonics or for flavoring the tansy pudding that was traditional Easter fare. Perhaps the first owners heeded the advice of apothecary Culpepper, who wrote, "Let those women who desire children love this herb; it is their best companion, their husbands excepted." The Van Vlacks, less credulous, grow it for old time's sake and for its prettily cut leaves and yellow button flowers.

The boulders of the herb garden steps change to the flat stones of a path curving catty-cornered across the large vegetable garden. The Van Vlacks grow most of the vegetables they eat, which takes a lot of space, but the vegetable garden isn't devoid of flowers. A New England homestead would hardly be complete without golden-glow, and no wonder every cottager had it, for it multiplies so fast that if not given away over the garden fence, it would certainly find its own way under it. Mrs. Van Vlack won't trust it in the borders, but it has a corner of the vegetable garden where the washing machine empties out. "It seems to like the soapsuds," she says.

In an age when man has walked on the moon, there's a measure of nostalgia for simpler, old-fashioned things. Mrs. Van Vlack, a talented, self-taught artist whose work reflects her love of flowers and the countryside, mentions the demand for sketches and paintings of picturesque privies. The "Hawley place" is neither museum nor monument to the past, and its present owners have always looked forward, not back, moving towards attainable goals at a sustainable pace. The outhouse has gone, and so has the old, separate summer kitchen. Electric light has replaced the old oil lamps. Sweet spring water still serves the cottage, but now it comes at the turn of a tap, and water once carried in milk cans to the flowers is pumped from the pond across the road. Fiddlehead ferns go into the 20th-century freezer (Sears 1952 and still going strong) in the cellar ("made for short people"), which was deepened by a foot. The delicious aroma of baking rhubarb, freshly picked, comes from a modern stove; the old bread oven is still there in the three-fireplace, 14-foot-square granite chimney breast that has warmed so many generations. Now the oven serves a different function: its door opens each Christmas onto a Nativity scene left permanently in place.

Earlier cottagers who called this place "home" would not recognize the garden now. There would have been flowers, many of them the same kinds: lilacs, pinks, antique roses and wild-flowers from the roadsides. But cottage gardens as picturesque as this are a product of our time. Few, even now, have the artistry of Mrs. Van Vlack, or her husband's willingness to get up at 5 a.m. to spray the flowers with water as protection against threatened late-spring frost.

The old house stands by the side of the road and will do so for many more years, a reassuring symbol of stability in a transient age; it is for this, not the privy, that we yearn. A cottage garden cannot be typecast, since it is less a gardening style than the manifestation of a way of life—hard-working, home-loving, creative and self-reliant. At the Van Vlack place, that hasn't changed. ♣

Pamela Harper is a frequent contributor to *American Horticulturist*. She is the owner of Harper Horticultural Slide Library in Seaford, Virginia.



Pamela Harper

ABOVE: Variegated moor grass, *Molinia caerulea* 'Variegata', Chinese chives, *Allium tuberosum*, and marigold 'Sparky' make a happy combination of common and uncommon plants near the author's door. RIGHT: Container-grown marigolds surround a well in the author's garden.

In Praise of Common Plants

BY FREDERICK MCGOURTY

Three or four times a year I am dragged, kicking and screaming, to a cocktail party by a wife who accuses me of becoming a hermit. I am not very good at such affairs and usually retreat to study a bookcase if I think I can get away with it. No one bothers a bibliophile, especially one who reads books. Every so often there is no bookcase, and I have to stand by the brie talking with someone whose eye reaches beyond my shoulder as soon as I answer her question about my occupation—a horticulturist. Not surprisingly, the conversation turns to cheese, and I remark about my fondness for brie, even when it is heated and has almonds on it, which seems increasingly the case in the complicated eighties. At the last bash this brought a swift retort: "But it's so common. Nobody serves it at the better parties anymore. Everyone's into chevre now, with shredded macadamias on top." I almost spilled my Campari and soda.

The same sort of thing happens when I attend plant meetings these days, too. Recently one speaker complained about the glaring ubiquity of annuals; another railed against hostas as the ornamental cabbages that are taking over America. The sneers are uttered with the sort of fervor that turf specialists reserve for lawns that have dandelions in them. I happen to be fond of dandelions, and once suggested to a lawn man that the world would be a better place if we let the dandelions grow and pulled out the grass, which gets in the way of the climax lawn. What is the sin of a dandelion except commonness? It is a beautiful plant. My turf friend realized at once that he was in the presence of an unregenerate American crank.

The fact is, it's a trendy country, and gardening, like any other field, has its share of "in" plants and "out" plants. Paperbark maple, Japanese painted fern, variegated Solomon's-seal and European wild ginger



Fred McGourty

are "in" plants, of course. "Out" plants, which may have been "in" at one time, include cannas, gladiolus (except the species, which are "in"), *Catalpa*, *Strelitzia* and *Kolkwitzia*. There are regional variations, especially in California. In general, the number of "out" plants is greater in the Northeast and Northwest than in other parts of the country. There are not many in the Plains states.

Occasionally a plant is "in" in one place, "out" in another. An example is crape myrtle, which is as common in the South as watermelon but undependably hardy in New York, hence valued. I know a person who grows a Japanese windmill palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) on an island off the Massachusetts coast. This specimen is a far cry from one grown in Ireland or Cornwall or even Norfolk, Virginia, but it is treasure in the eye of the owner-beholder. A few advanced plantsmen like *Gaura lindheimeri*, a perennial wildflower from Texas with white flowers resembling moths who have been through a hailstorm. It is not very well known among gardeners, and it is not intended to be. *Gaura* is one

of those plants with quiet grace. Quiet grace, of course, is a horticultural euphemism for secondary elegance. The *Gaura* Cult has grown.

A Multinational Thistle

Along with nine or 10 other people in America, I am fond of the Scotch thistle, *Onopordum acanthium*, whose prickly, silver rosettes give rise the second year to very prickly, eight-foot-tall stalks. As they reach toward the heavens these become candelabras bearing reddish purple flowers in July, much like those of the globe artichoke. Scotch thistle isn't really Scottish at all, and it was probably an Englishman who first called it Scotch, as an epithet. It is native from Europe to central Asia but has moved around in its own exuberant way. In South America it is called the Argentine thistle, probably by the Chileans.

Stately biennials such as the Scotch thistle are not easy to use in the landscape, especially ours. My wife expressed her opinion on the subject in no uncertain terms: "You'll plant those thistles in my garden over my dead body!" Mary Ann is not one of the nine or 10 Onopordophiles on this side of the Atlantic, and my efforts at plant sensitivity training have not been entirely successful.

Much of the success of a garden has to do with the proper placement of plants, and I ascertained that there was room for compromise, or at least maneuvering, since Mary Ann had specifically referred to the garden, not the property. In this give-and-take, I was given the driveway as part of the settlement, with the understanding that early each August Mary Ann's son would be allowed to chop down the Scotch thistles with an ax before the seeds ripened fully and spilled over into the next county. Steven spends most of July sharpening the ax. He is not one of the nine or 10 Onopordophiles, either.

Fortunately, the large driveway of our old farm is unpaved, though the soil has

been compacted by two centuries of pressure from cows, horses, stagecoaches, wagons, tractors, cars, trucks, backhoes and overweight Labrador retrievers. The evidence is covered by an inch or two of battleship gray pebbles called traprock.

I carefully chose a planting spot away from wheels, human feet, cat runs and potential home plates of pre-teen baseball crazies. As I believe in Scotch thistles going first class, I selected a southerly location next to our barn, between a garage door that opens to a tool storage area and another door that leads to an old stable where pots are stored. There is considerable traffic between the two. When wife, young 'uns and our nursery staff go by, they can all admire the Scotch thistles, I thought. Well, they at least look at the thistles, though not with the kind of warmth these noble plants deserve. Each person except me looks forward to early August, and there is an irreverent celebration on the appointed day of felling.

Growing Scotch thistle in gravel is a bit of an art. The improvement of the soil, as it were, consisted of incorporating several shovelful of peat moss, worked in by pick until the pick broke. Good sendoffs are vital, so I added some super phosphate and lime, too. Actually the sendoff was more like a takeoff, and I, for one, am pleased to report that a modest naturalizing has taken place. With biennials, one must leave a few seeds to ripen *in situ* lest the species should die out, which my wife thinks an unlikely occurrence with Scotch thistle. We also let a few first-year plants remain at the base of the clump—more than we need perhaps, but the silver rosettes are pretty and form a pleasant contrast with the gray traprock and the barn-red barn. *Genius loci*, I always say. "Barnyard plants," Mary Ann mutters.

Johnny-Jump-Ups

I have always had a sneaking admiration for Johnny-jump-ups, *Viola tricolor*, the European wild pansy that must have come to America in the wake of the Mayflower. Few plants have had more names over the years—some 60 alone in English, including herb trinity, three-faces-in-a-hood, love-idleness, cull-me-to-you and heart's-ease, a name that later rubbed off on the garden pansy, which is a nineteenth-century hybrid of *V. tricolor* and one or two other species. It is not good form to admit strong fondness for Johnny-jump-ups, but they have won more friends over the years than, say, *Acanthophyllum gypsophiloides*.

Our first gardening encounter with Johnny-jump-ups occurred some years ago

when Throckmorton, a quintessentially Yankee bachelor friend, dropped by with a couple of flats that had just been given to him by an older lady for whom he occasionally gardened. There were all sorts of variations in flower color, running the gamut of purple, yellow and white, the three tints that make up the "tricolor" in the species name. Throckmorton made a point of picking them over and reserving the most colorful for himself. In fact, we were left with the purple ones, pretty enough but not what we had anticipated.

The Johnny-jump-ups were planted in one of our perennial borders, and they flowered beautifully all through the season. I began to wonder why no one gave them prime spots in the garden. The next year the reason became abundantly clear. They had increased their space to half the border, and we realized that something had to be done. One day a visiting rock gardener who thought we should have a rock garden, too, suggested that the far end of our driveway, away from the Scotch thistles, be turned into a scree. Well, water certainly does run through, under and over the driveway in late winter, and there is no shortage of small stones.

I gathered that the conditions would not have quite met with the approval of Farrer (author of *The English Rock Garden*), so I decided upon a fantasy scree in the driveway. We sprigged in a few young plants of Johnny-jump-ups, and nature took over in its inimitable way, despite the occasional intercession of automobile wheels and snowplows. Each spring there is a veritable cavalry unit of new seedlings, and we let them gallop to their heart's content, or ease, so to speak. They are still mostly purple, which doesn't really bother us, but when we visit the gardens of friends who have good tricolor Johnnys, Mary Ann and I take a moment to admire them, which brings an odd stare from our hosts. They would rather have us appreciate their *Acanthophyllum gypsophiloides*.

The Marigold Peace Settlement

I am in my post-marigold period of gardening, but that does not mean that I cannot stop and wink at one from time to time, particularly when no one else is around. Visitors are sometimes surprised to see them in our garden. I gently point to my wife (if she is not looking), and they understand as I hustle them off to another border. Marigolds, you see, are part of the marital compromise. One June, a day or two after returning from our honeymoon, Mary Ann asked when we were going to put in the annuals. The garden looked rather

complete to me, and with a guarded tone I asked what annuals she had in mind. I hoped she was planning for next year, and for color in the vegetable garden in the meadow beyond our house, out of sight. "Love me, love my marigolds!" she exclaimed. "I want them up front, right by the door. Orange ones, yellow ones, maybe some white ones, too."

I took the offensive. "Mary Ann, this is a quiet residential area. What will the neighbors think? Besides, there may be zoning regulations. And what do you expect me to tell the president of the International Meconopsis Society when he drops by for lunch?" She replied, "Tell him David Burpee is coming for dinner." That settled it. I lost.

I may have lost the war, but I was determined to win the peace. If marigolds are to be planted, one should at least go about it properly. Concessions were exacted. In return for limiting the planting by the back door to one area and with surrounding plants of my choice, I conceded to Mary Ann's color selection, 'Sunkist' orange. In addition, several window boxes by our old well would be given to marigolds, but they had to be small, yellow, single-flowered French types such as 'Dainty Marietta', or signet types, which for marigolds are refined, especially when mixed with dusty-millers and *Nierembergia*. We agreed someday to try the low-growing foliage marigold called Irish-lace, *Tagetes filifolia*, which late in the season bears tiny whitish flowers that cannot be seen from a speeding car. Essentially, it is a marigold for people who don't like marigolds. You don't see it around much, but it is available.

But what we are really talking about is orange. It is a difficult color to get around, particularly 'Sunkist' orange. Actually, there are not many plants that have it: some cultivars of *Kniphofia*, zinnias and calendulas; also California poppies (*Eschscholzia* sp.) and butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), which is not the hard electric shade because the flowers are small. I thought of the times I had seen these plants displayed well in gardens, and it was usually with yellow flowers or golden-foliaged plants.

Just around this time a nurseryman friend who was trying to interest us in ornamental grasses gave us a mature plant of variegated moor grass, *Molinia caerulea* 'Variegata', which has leaves striped green and pale yellow. It makes a tidy clump about two feet tall when the airy flowers appear in late summer. What we did not know then was that *Molinia* is one of the most



Pamela Harper

The woolly leaves of lamb's-ears, *Stachys byzantina*, surround the common, but much loved flowers of Johnny-jump-ups.



Hosta 'Krossa Regal' is a relatively new cultivar of this much loved plant. It has gray-green foliage and five- to six-foot scapes.

beautiful of all perennial grasses and looks well even in early winter when the leaves become light buff. Our friend suggested that we plant the *Molinia* near the door so we would be aware of its presence in winter.

The moor grass has served as the catalyst for a grouping of low-growing 'Sunkist' orange marigolds we planted in front of and alongside it. Also, it cools while they enhance, and the combination works. For a complement, some ornamental onions with gray leaves and soft yellow flowers, *Allium flavum*, were planted nearby. Their flowers open in a fascinating manner near, but not at the top of, the scape, from a long beak that encloses them. They bloom for a number of weeks in midsummer. This is one of the prettiest alliums, and it almost takes the minds of curmudgeons off marigolds.

Ever So Sweet Alyssum

There are few banal plants, just banal sites or banal combinations. One annual that I have never found banal in any way or location is a low-growing plant from the Mediterranean world that most gardeners take for granted—sweet alyssum, *Lobularia maritima*. There is no need to describe it here except to say that there are purple- and rosy-pink-flowered variants of the usual white-flowered mat, 'Carpet of Snow'. As an edging plant, the last has bound down many a border that otherwise would have been strident red or yellow clouds floating in space.

I like sweet alyssum best, however, as individual specimens planted among low-growing foliage plants of patrician but slightly obese form, such as *Bergenia* or the first-year rosettes of the wonderfully felty silver sage, *Salvia argentea*. One pleasant use of 'Royal Carpet' sweet alyssum, which has purple flowers with a bit of white, is to intersperse it among plants of this superb sage, where the alyssum provides textural change but color compatibility. The two, in turn, are guarded as a distinct garden scenario by a background of lavender-blue *Stokesia*, in turn overseen by purple coneflower, *Echinacea purpurea*. The flanks are safe from invasion if there are some grays, pinks and whites defending them. There is no shortage of choices. These are cool, lingering scenes for the beach days of summer.

Sweet alyssum differs from most annuals because it is frost tolerant, and even in our wretched New England climate there may be some flowers as late as November. It also self-sows, and each year there is usually a new batch of seedlings near where

plants were the year before. I simply spend a few minutes each spring rearranging them and discarding the excess.

One of the loveliest uses of sweet alyssum is simple abandonment. A few years ago a landscape designer friend took me on a tour of gardens in Beverly Hills. We stopped at a posh hotel where there were fine, rather elaborate designs with many plants I knew only from straitjacket culture in greenhouses. I don't relate to such plants very well but was aware that praise, or at least gentle comment, was expected. Then, off to one side appeared a brick terrace covered with low white mounds. Sometime before, the area between the bricks had been given to sweet alyssum instead of the customary mother-of-thyme, and it had filled the openings beautifully and lavishly. My friend was disappointed that my attention was focused on such common plants, so I made a point of speaking favorably about some lantanas nearby, which made matters worse. But then, even the cracks of Los Angeles sidewalks are fascinating to northeasterners whose plants of red valerian (*Centranthus ruber*) or Mexican fleabane (*Erigeron karvinskianus*) have faded away. One man's garden flower is another man's weed.

An Old Soldier Among Hostas

Much has been written lately concerning new hostas, often with condescension toward older sorts. Reading the future requires more tea leaves than reading the past, but some of the novelties that have foliage of real distinction—among them 'Francee' (with silver variegated leaves), 'Gold Standard' (chartreuse with green edge) and 'Krossa Regal' (with gray foliage and five- or six-foot-tall scapes)—will likely be valued for years. A host of others, fairly good soldiers though they may be, are apt to fade away. The word "new" has special appeal for gardeners, and in horticultural parlance it is considered synonymous with "better," much to the satisfaction of everyone but a few mossbacks, curmudgeons and blockers of general progress.

I suspect that a few of the older hostas will survive the onslaught. One that I see everywhere these days, from plantings of other times, is *Hosta lancifolia*, which makes a serviceable edging or ground cover, although the glossy green leaves are small for the genus. It is still one of the best hostas for flowers, which are rich lavender and borne in the latter part of summer after most other hostas have ceased blooming. *Hosta lancifolia* is almost indestructible, a trait not always appreciated by nurserymen. Like marigolds, it has suffered a lot

from banal uses. However, as a ground cover under the common, almost overpowering peegee hydrangea, *H. paniculata* 'Grandiflora', whose white snowballs of flowers appear at the same time this hosta is in bloom, the effect is very pleasing.

I also like to have a group planting of *Hosta lancifolia* in a shaded spot near several clumps of *Astilbe taquetii* 'Superba', which grows three to four feet tall and has steeple-shaped clusters of flowers the color of black raspberry ice cream. Their bloom periods overlap, as does that of *Astilbe* 'William Buchanan', a lovely, shiny, cut-leaved plant that has eight-inch-tall clusters of white flowers. This is one of the most vigorous of the really dwarf astilbes and is itself a candidate for ground cover in a small area.

I have made a fair number of divisions of *Hosta lancifolia* over the years for our own garden as well as for the nursery. Toward the end of one spring afternoon several years ago, my fingers were almost numb from breaking up large clumps of this hosta, and the barn floor was littered with its fresh young leaves. The telephone rang. It was Mary Ann, delayed in a neighboring town and asking me to get dinner started. She said that some spinach was in the refrigerator.

It was a cold day, and I needed little prodding to enter the kitchen. Meal preparation went well once my thumbs had thawed, but we were short on spinach. Not long before, a gardening acquaintance versed in ways Japanese had casually mentioned to me that hostas were used occasionally in the Orient for cooking. Inspired, I dashed to the barn, picked up the afternoon's leavings, and returned to the kitchen. After washing the foliage carefully and removing the pithy midrib, I mixed the hosta leaves with the spinach.

Cooking was brief, and I was busy chopping the greens as Mary Ann came into the driveway. Dinner was on the table in a flash. I surreptitiously watched her as she ate the concoction, because she is usually able to detect anything out of the ordinary, down to the tiniest anchovy or scungilli I might add to spaghetti sauce. The "spinach" passed muster, or at least went without comment, and I eventually took a few bites, too. Hosta greens probably don't have much of a future in the American kitchen, but they're nice to know about if you run short on spinach or have too many lancifolias in the garden. . . .

Frederick McGourty and his wife, Mary Ann, own Hillside Gardens, a nursery in Norfolk, Connecticut specializing in perennials.



P. Feldman

Ladew Topiary Gardens

BY FRANCIS M. RACKEMANN, JR.

One of the finest topiary gardens in the world is located about 20 miles north of Baltimore, Maryland. Each year, horticulturists and garden lovers from around the world visit 22-acre Ladew Topiary Gardens, famous for its topiary hedges and sculptures, and 15 theme gardens.

The late Harvey Smith Ladew, for whom the estate is named, was a lifelong bachelor born in New York. Fond of fox hunting and traveling, Ladew was a painter, an artist and designer, a philanthropist and a gentleman farmer. His love of fox hunting and the outdoors eventually attracted him to the Maryland countryside, where, in 1929, he bought an old farm. Over the years, he restored and enlarged the farmhouse (known as Pleasant Valley House) while pursuing his interest in topiary and gardening.

Topiary, which dates back to the first century, is the art of training, cutting and trimming trees and shrubs into odd or ornamental shapes. Ladew became excited



M. Hamilton Whitman

about topiary after seeing the clipped hedges in English gardens. He liked to plant, grow, prune and shape figures out of yew, hemlock, privet and box, turning them into a fantasy world ranging from whimsical to stately. He bought his first wire forms (around which he shaped his topiary figures) in England; later he designed others to be made locally. In addition to creating topiary figures, Ladew laid out and planted 15 different theme gardens on his Maryland estate.

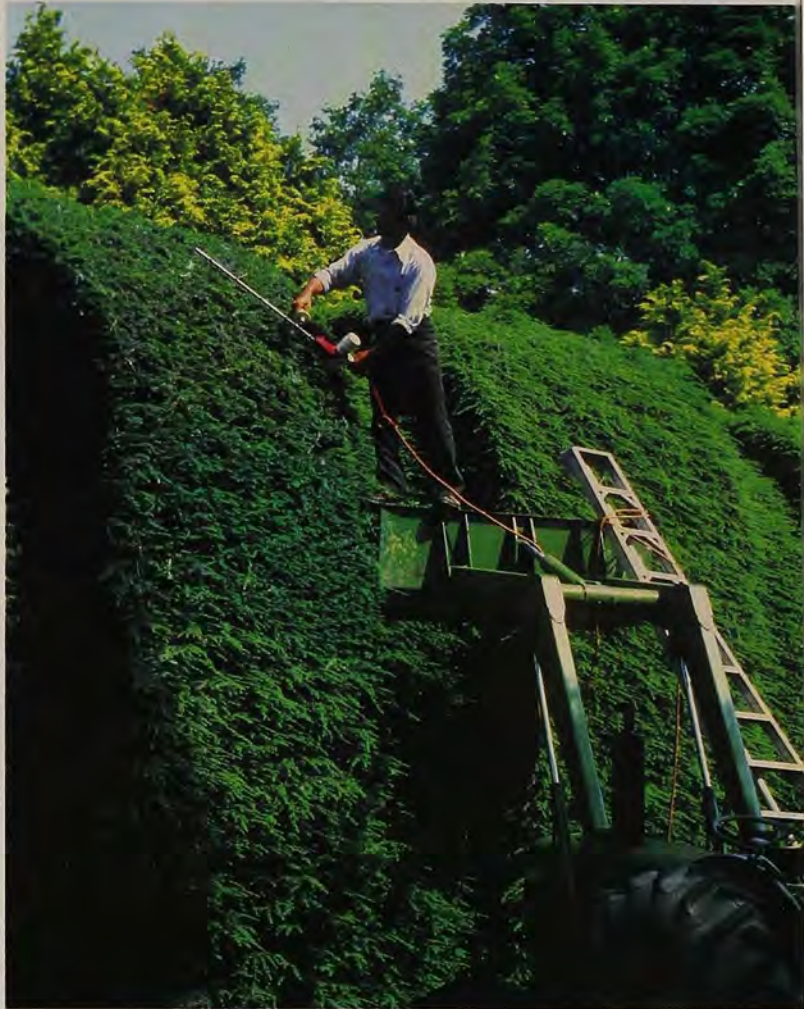
In July 1965 Ladew opened his grounds to the public, explaining, "I'd like to think that these gardens could be preserved as a

ABOVE: Ladew Topiary Gardens is famous for its many hedges, which have been clipped into a wide variety of shapes and sizes. LEFT: This yew seahorse can be found in the Sculpture Garden at Ladew.

RIGHT: The Yellow Garden at Ladew is filled with yellow-flowered iris, Exbury azaleas and golden-chain trees, as well as maroon-leaved Japanese maples and golden-foliaged trees and shrubs.



Duane Suter



park for the enjoyment of people who live in the city and surrounding areas. Otherwise," he warned, "the place will be bulldozed and made into something else." None of the local governments—including Baltimore city, Harford County or the state—had sufficient funds to maintain the gardens, so he established the Ladew Topiary Gardens Foundation, a non-profit organization now headed by Mrs. Benjamin H. Griswold, III. Harvey Smith Ladew died in 1976 at the age of 89, 11 years after bequeathing his estate to the foundation.

Today, Ladew's 15 gardens as well as the house are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Although Pleasant Valley House—with its antiques and unusual decor—is a major attraction, the topiary hedges and flower gardens are what capture the attention of most visitors.

Perhaps the most famous attraction at Ladew Gardens is a topiary horse and rider jumping a fence while pursuing hounds, which are, in turn, chasing a topiary fox. All of the characters in this evergreen drama are scattered across a lawn near the main entrance to the garden. A 25-foot-high, four-tiered topiary in Japanese yew (*Taxus*

cuspidata) topped by the figure of a rooster, which Ladew brought along with him from his former residence on Long Island, still stands by the gardener's cottage at the entrance to the estate. Ladew "let his fantasies run rampant," according to Mrs. George Constable, head of the Ladew committee in charge of overseeing the garden's maintenance. Visitors can enjoy yew topiaries in a wide variety of shapes, including a sea horse, a unicorn, a butterfly, two lyrebirds, a large top hat, Churchill's World War II "V for Victory" sign and a fish. So unique are Ladew's creations that in May 1971, the Garden Club of America gave him its distinguished service award for "developing and maintaining the most outstanding topiary garden in America."

The first-time visitor to the beautiful, well-kept estate is struck immediately by the contrast between the long, white house and related buildings, the topiary sculptures and hedges, and the colorful gardens. The diversity is especially apparent among the various theme gardens. The Wild Garden, for example, contains ferns and such native wildflowers as *Phlox divaricata*, Jack-in-the-pulpit, May apples, bloodroot and

Virginia bluebells. Spring bulbs add early bloom. Next is the Victorian Garden, with its concrete furniture, rhododendrons, azaleas, Chinese forget-me-nots and bulbs in shades of blue and lavender. Specimens of *Cryptomeria japonica* line each side of the entry gate.

The Berry Garden is designed for birds. Plants include *Pachysandra terminalis*, *Cotoneaster divaricatus*, *Taxus*, *Skimmia*, *Viburnum*, crabapples, *Pyracantha* and hollies. The Berry Garden leads to the Croquet Court, with its salmon-colored roses, blue *Tradescantia* and Siberian iris. This area was originally a tennis court that Ladew converted to croquet.

The Pink Garden contains pink azaleas, fairy roses, *Astilbe*, rhododendrons, *Weigela*, crabapples, dogwood, crape myrtle and *Wisteria*. Next to this garden is the Rose Garden, filled with 350 rose bushes underplanted with pansies and boasting a tall, circular brick wall that is espaliered with fruit trees. Following the Rose Garden is the Garden of Eden, with its Belgian fence of espaliered fruit trees, and the Keyhole Garden, with a red plum tree, pigmy barberry (*Berberis thunbergii* 'Atropur-



FAR LEFT ABOVE: The Croquet Court is surrounded by clipped hedges, roses and deep blue iris. FAR LEFT BELOW: In spring, azaleas and white tulips are predominant in the White Garden. CENTER: Trimming the hemlock hedges requires expertise and skill in handling the heavy equipment. ABOVE: Twelve swans swim along an undulating topiary hedge that borders the huge bowl in the center of the garden. LEFT: A topiary Buddah sits atop a small rise in the Iris Garden.

purea), rhododendrons and red volcano coleus.

Harvey Ladew's plans for the Water Lily Garden had to be modified, since the area became too shady. It is now planted with a collection of rare hostas as well as *Lamium*, *Vinca*, *Pachysandra*, *Liriope*, *Sarcococca* and *Hydrangea* standards. This is the only instance in which the Ladew Committee has not followed Ladew's original plans.

Many truckloads of old brush were removed from the White Garden; Ladew's enthusiasm for building new gardens outran his capacity for upkeep, and the White Garden was in poor shape at the time of his death. In went Chinese and flowering dogwoods as well as *Stewartia*, all in accordance with Ladew's original ideas. The trees blend with the white mums, impatiens, tulips, *Nicotiana*, *Cimicifuga*, lily-of-the-valley, white-flowered *Hosta plantaginea* 'Grandiflora', snowdrops and narcissus—all against a background of lilacs, *Clethra*, snowball viburnum and mock orange (*Philadelphus* sp.).

Ladew's Yellow Garden is planted with yellow iris, Exbury azaleas, *Kerria japon-*

ica, golden-chain trees (*Laburnum X watereri*), *Taxus* and golden-foliaged cultivars of arborvitae, as well as dogwoods with golden variegation, Japanese maples and all kinds of semi-dwarf, yellow-foliaged plants. Daylilies bordering a man-made stream, and potentilla ("which doesn't do very well," according to Mrs. Constable) complete the picture.

Also on the Ladew estate are the Terrace, Portico, Herb and Gardener's Cottage Gardens, each of which has its own distinct characteristics. Near the Temple of Venus and Tivoli Teahouse is the Sculpture Garden, with its topiaries and large beds of colorful perennials and annuals. This garden is also named the "gun range," because Ladew had originally used the area for skeet shooting.

The huge bowl in the center of the garden, with its manicured lawn and center pool, is backed by a tall, topiary hedge of Canadian hemlock, *Tsuga canadensis*. One side of the bowl is bordered by a yew hedge with a dozen topiary swans swimming in topiary waves. It takes five men 10 days to trim these hedges. The bowl is used for concerts, ballet and drama events, as well

as for weddings and other social functions.

Behind the hedge with the swans is the Iris Garden, which boasts a Chinese junk and a Buddha of clipped yew at the end. The iris developed a rust seven years ago and had to be removed. The garden was subsequently closed to the public, then replanted. The stream bed was also renovated and rocks added, along with mounds of soil. "We even built two bridges across the stream to get ladies across," said Mrs. Constable, noting that lilacs, crabapples, evergreens and berry bushes line the sides of the Oriental Garden.

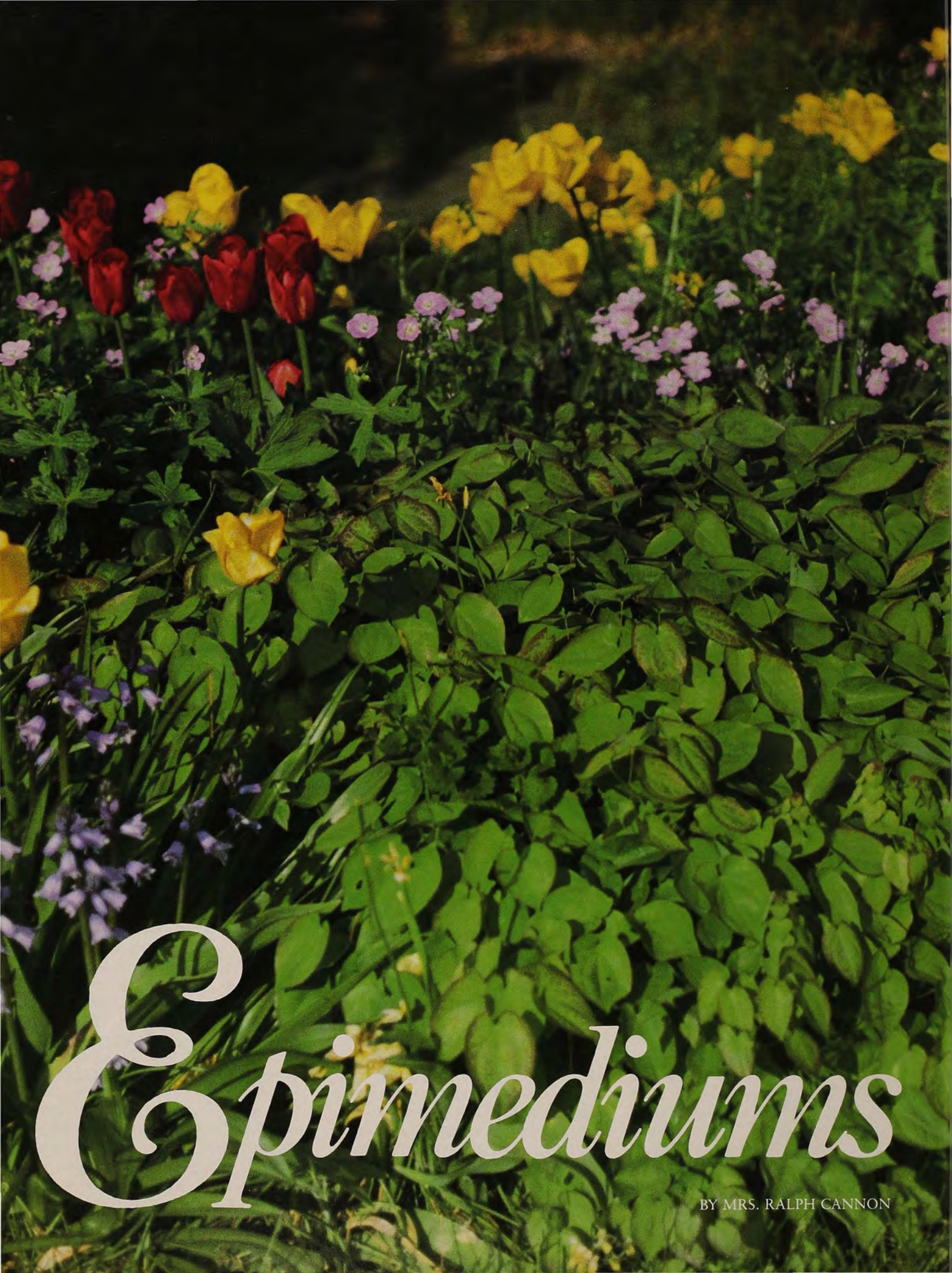
More topiary hedges and sculptured evergreen objects—shaped like obelisks, pyramids or hemlock garlands with window-like openings—are located between the bowl and the house. Four old locust trees, located on the rear lawn of the house, are covered with *Wisteria* and climbing hydrangea, *Hydrangea anomala* subsp. *petiolaris*. Foundation plants include roses, *Andromeda*, *Leucothoe*, azaleas, crape myrtle, candytuft, geraniums and chrysanthemums. Water lily pools add accent, while hanging baskets of burrow's-tail sedum and geraniums add interest under the roof of the porches during the summer.

Lena Caron, a native of Virginia, has been executive director of Ladew Topiary Gardens since January 1981. She has a full-time gardening staff of four who work with part-time helpers and the volunteers. Outside professional services are called on for some lawn maintenance and tree work.

Gardens are watered by soaker hoses and sometimes by overhead sprinklers. Winterizing such property requires mulching flower gardens, adding leaves to the compost, checking garden and lawn furniture, draining water pipes, adding logs to pools and lifting plants that are not winter hardy. Many of Ladew's flowers are started in the small greenhouse on the property. Gardens are mulched with hardwood bark to keep down weeds and conserve moisture. Tools are kept clean, which helps reduce the spread of disease.

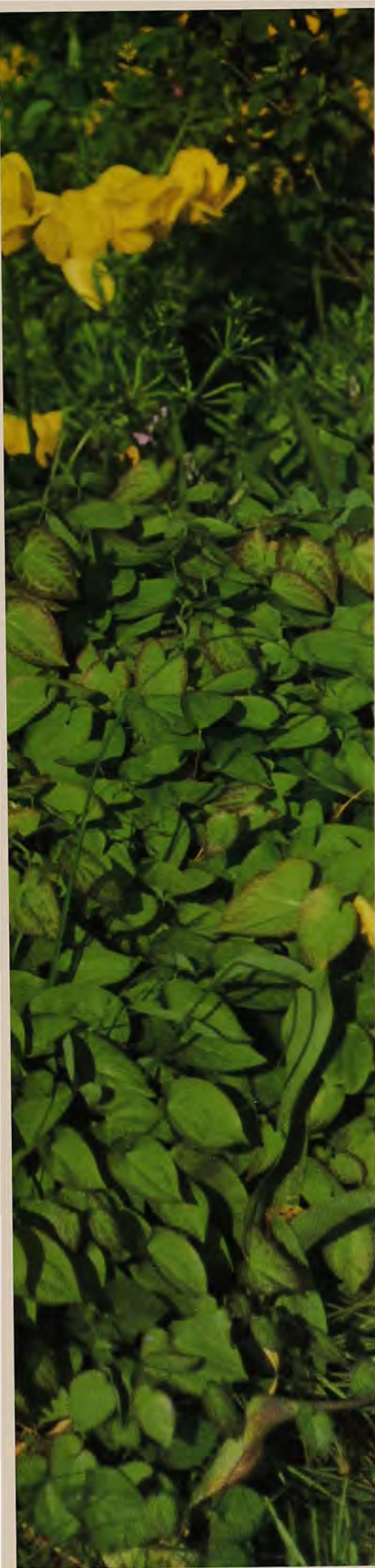
While Ladew's board of directors makes every effort to follow Harvey Ladew's original ideas, the garden committee is constantly introducing new varieties that are more colorful, more disease resistant and easier to maintain. "This is Harvey's garden, and we are keeping faithfully to his original aims," Mrs. Constable said. Even when plants must be replaced, the staff tries "new and unusual varieties of the same plant." ❁

Francis M. Rackemann, Jr., is the Garden Editor for the *Evening Sun* in Baltimore, Maryland.



Epimediums

BY MRS. RALPH CANNON



Barbara W. Ellis

Epimediums are probably among the most tolerant plants that a gardener can grow. They are becoming deservedly popular not only as ground covers but also as accent plants in the rock garden or low-growing plants in the border.

These attractive plants are members of the Berberidaceae, or barberry family, and, although native to Europe and Asia, are good-natured, tolerant plants for American gardens. They offer their beautiful foliage and spring flowers in odd corners, on banks, in waste places, in shady or sunny places, or in wet or dry areas. If epimediums were not so accommodating, perhaps they would be more appreciated.

If given the opportunity and if properly treated, epimediums will provide a fine display throughout their entire growing season. They are a perfect choice for a shady, naturalized woodland area where minimal labor is the object. Although naturalization will not produce a labor-free garden, it will help reduce necessary work; if you clothe the ground with plants of your own liking, nature will not have to step in and cover areas with plants that you would not choose to grow.

Epimediums will grow in any kind of soil—acid, neutral or limy. They like dappled shade created by over-hanging trees, but they will grow and succeed in a sunless place as well. If they must grow in full sunshine, provide them with light soil containing humus, leaf mold, peat and plenty of moisture. Just before spring arrives clip off all of the old leaves to prevent the old foliage from obscuring the beauty of the dainty spring flowers. In my Chicago-area garden, few of these dead leaves seem to persist on the plants until spring. Epimediums are shallow-rooted, so do not disturb them by cultivating around their roots.

Epimediums produce spurred blossoms resembling small columbines. The blooms are borne in loose sprays of about nine to 10 inches in height. After the spring bloom the new leaves, which are light green, heart-shaped, shiny and leathery, appear on stiff stems. In the fall the leaves turn reddish brown for their autumn dress.

Division is the best method for propagation. Divide clumps just before the plants break dormancy in the spring or just after the bloom period. Use a sharp knife to cut divisions away from the plant, since the roots are tough and wiry. Plant the divisions in individual pots containing an equal mixture of sand, leaf mold and vermiculite. Once they have grown into small plants,

Epimediums provide a lovely ground cover to offset the brilliant colors of spring tulips and *Geranium* sp. at River Farm.

they can be returned to the garden. (Larger divisions can be planted directly into the garden.) Epimediums produce very little seed that could be used for propagation. However, young volunteer plants, which are sometimes found in a planting, prove that there is some self-sown seed.

Although epimediums are not indigenous to my Chicago woodland, I have naturalized many of these lovely plants. I first planted three selections—*Epimedium* *X rubrum*, *E. X versicolor* 'Sulphureum' (formerly *E. sulphureum*) and *E. grandiflorum*—in groups of three plants each.

E. X rubrum, a colonizer, is semi-evergreen and has rhizomatous roots. Its wiry stems are about nine inches in height, and they carry heart-shaped, bronze-green, leathery leaves that are margined in red. The small flowers are ruby red. The old leaves of the plants have to be removed each spring; otherwise, the red flowers, which are borne on short stems, will not be seen. *E. X versicolor* 'Sulphureum' produces soft yellow- or sulphur-colored flowers in May and June. The flowers are followed by cordate, shiny green leaves. *E. grandiflorum* bears white flowers that are followed by heart-shaped, shiny, leathery leaves of light green. These plants have been very successful in my woodland.

Other species and hybrids of this genus are also worth seeking and will make excellent inhabitants in a garden. *E. pinnatum*, for example, is a strong grower with large, leathery leaves borne on stiff, 12-inch stems. In spring, a display of short-spurred, yellow flowers appears. This is a fine plant for edging or for use as a ground cover. *E. X youngianum* 'Niveum' is a dainty cultivar that has large white flowers. *E. 'Rose Queen'* is a most delightful cultivar with crimson blossoms. The spurs of each flower are tipped with white. *E. perralderanum* is a tough, vigorous plant that makes an excellent ground cover. It has yellow-brown flowers and bright green leaves tinted with red and brown. Swards of this plant will conquer a weed problem.

There is always something exciting about growing plants that are not indigenous to your garden. In my case, by growing epimediums in my woodland, I have learned just how strong and adaptable they are; only time will tell how well they will naturalize. Should you decide to try epimediums yourself, either as ground covers or as low-growing plants, you will be rewarded in full measure. ♣

Mrs. Ralph Cannon received her doctorate from the University of Chicago and is now retired as Professor Emeritus from that institution.

CHILDREN &



Virginia Daley

GARDENING

BY GORDON HAYWARD

They race through the soil I just rototilled and planted; they bulldoze the lettuce with their Tonka toys; they come into the house beaming with pride to present us with 108 green tomatoes they just picked. Children *in* the garden? Tell me how to keep them out.

While our five-year-old son Nathaniel has done his share of picking the wrong tomatoes, plowing under the freshly planted seedlings and walking on the rows, we have managed to introduce him to the wonder of growing things. Now, with two gardening seasons under his wheelbarrow, he is eager to begin a third. We are convinced that with careful planning, good gardening techniques and lots of encouragement, anyone and his or her child can experience the pleasures of gardening together.

The first thing you can do with your child is to ask him if he would like to have his own garden. If he responds with enthusiasm, involve him in the selection of vegetable and flower seeds as well as tools. Grandparents who live at a distance, but who would like to encourage their grandchildren, could send seeds from their area; or, during a spring visit, they could provide potted plants or starter packs with seedlings already established.

When selecting vegetable seeds with and for your child or grandchild, keep three things in mind: What vegetables does he enjoy eating? What plants mature relatively quickly? Which plants can be cared for easily? Our son, for example, enjoys picking edible-podded peas, carrots, lettuce, beans, cucumbers and sometimes a tiny zucchini. These vegetables also reach maturity quickly and have few pests or diseases.

If your child would like flowers as well as vegetables in his garden, nasturtiums are a particularly good choice. They grow quickly from seed sown directly into the soil and rapidly develop into luxuriant mounds of flowers and foliage. The flower is also edible, a fact that often intrigues a child. Sunflowers are also wonderful. Al-

though they take the full growing season to mature, they are so dramatic in size that children enjoy watching them grow higher and higher. You might also consider calendula, white alyssum, cosmos, nicotiana or morning-glories.

Many plants can be grown satisfactorily from seed, but others should be purchased as established plants. Children enjoy cherry tomatoes, for instance; but, if started from seeds indoors six to eight weeks before planting out in the garden, a child may lose interest and stop caring for the seedlings. During the first year or two of your child's gardening experience, it is especially important to do everything possible to help him succeed.

If you live in the city and can only garden in pots on the balcony, introduce your child to plants that have been specially hybridized for their small, compact growth habits. If you would like to plant cherry tomatoes, consider Harris's 'Presto' or Burpee's 'Tiny Tim' or 'Basket King'. Cucumbers, particularly the new bush types that do not send out lengthy vines, are also good for balcony gardens. You could also encourage your child to grow herbs or nasturtiums in pots. If your balcony is shady, impatiens is a good shade-loving plant.

The greater the variety, the better. One never knows what will attract a child's interest. Last year it was Nathaniel's bean house; this year it was one single petunia plant. He and his schoolmates visited a nursery where the nurseryman gave each of them a single petunia plant. We set our son's plant into one of our perennial borders, and there wasn't a day that went by that Nathaniel didn't check his plant. When I watered the rudbeckia and coreopsis, he watered his petunia; when I deadheaded the lavender or marigolds, he took the seed pods off his petunia. It was a theme for the entire summer.

If you are a neighbor with no children, give the child next door a plant, and you may have a friend for life. The things you could teach that child are almost limitless:

responsibility; pride; a respect for life; an awareness that plants are living, changing and beautiful things with special needs and preferences. . . .

Once you have decided what seeds and plants to buy, you can begin to lay out the design of your child's garden with him. If at all possible, open up a new garden area that is close to, but separate from, your garden. If that is not possible, mark off a section of your vegetable garden with steppingstones, an informal fence or a marigold border. A child needs to know just what space is his.

You do not have to be rigid about the shape of the garden. Friends of ours have three daughters, and when their girls were all under 10 years of age, they prepared three, 4-by-12-foot gardens that were separated by strips of lawn. Each garden had an arched or semicircular end that approximated the shape of a stained-glass window. The gardens were planted with flowers and vegetables in blocks rather than rows, so they indeed resembled stained-glass windows when surveyed from the limb of a nearby apple tree.

Be inventive in your design, and encourage your child to come up with ideas, too. Try curvilinear shapes, or a circle 10 feet in diameter that could have a small herb garden in the center. (You can outline the shape with your garden hose.) Consider including a fence somewhere in the design that can be used to support trailing plants like cucumbers or morning-glories.

Once you have chosen specific seeds and have plants and a design in mind, your child will need some tools. (Here is another way grandparents can help in encouraging their grandchildren to garden.) The Smith and Hawken catalogue is an excellent source for children's gardening tools. According to their catalogue, "One of the frustrations for children in beginning gardening is that no one has taken seriously the making of children's tools. Tools are either cheap or inadequate, or children are left to use adult's tools which are large and ungainly." The

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CHILDREN & GARDENING

catalogue goes on to say that "down-scale tools give the child an immediate sense of purpose and effect of normal tools. . . . The T-handles permit small hands a good two-handed grip. Their durability allows years of use and wear."

Whether you buy a fine spade, fork or iron rake from Smith and Hawken, or an onion hoe, a hand trowel or "ladies' gardening tools" from the local hardware store, take the tools you give your child seriously. If you think he will need a cart, for example, get a two-wheeled bucket type rather than a wheelbarrow; it will be easier for him to manage alone. Look carefully at the tool with respect to your child's strength and size. He will need good implements to work with, just as you do. Give your child the best tools now, show him how to use and maintain them properly, and his gardening experience will be much enhanced. And years later he will have a set of tools to give his own children, or maybe he will give them back to you when you are older.

Your child's tools will also be useful to grandparents or anyone in the family who, because of a handicap, cannot use adult-scale tools. If you garden on a balcony or patio, you will also find these tools useful.

When the soil is dry enough in the spring to be tilled, prepare it for planting with your child. After the soil is turned, show him how to enrich it so that his plants will grow well; add generous amounts of decomposed compost or cow manure. This is an important step, because nothing will discourage a child more than to put a lot of time and effort into a garden, only to end up with poor results.

When it comes time to plant, show your child how to mark out the rows or planting blocks and how deep and far apart each variety of seed or plant should be set, but let *him* do the planting. With his nimble little fingers and the very real patience a child has when truly involved, he can do a good job of planting. Consider planting in blocks rather than in rows; such dense planting, where the leaves of individual plants touch each other, creates shade sufficient to discourage many weeds.

You might also try planting seeds so that plants come up in interesting new ways. For example, last summer Nathaniel and I made a bean house that even Jack would have admired. We set five beanpoles into the soil perpendicularly, in the shape of a semicircle. The open side faced north; the back faced south. The distance between the two outermost poles was about eight

feet. Once the poles were in place, I tied another long pole across the tops of the two outermost poles, and then tied baling twine from that crosspiece to the top of each pole, thus forming a latticework "roof." We then planted six 'Kentucky Wonder' pole beans at the base of each pole.

***One never knows
what will attract a
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petunia plant.***

Weeks later the bean vines had climbed to the top of each pole and onto the latticework at the top, and they were in full bloom; his house was complete. On more than one hot summer day, he sat in the shade of his bean house on a stump of wood I had placed there for a seat. There he could pluck and eat beans to his heart's content.

To help your child distinguish young weeds from young vegetable seedlings, you might have him plant a few seeds in carefully labeled flats a few days before he plants seeds in the garden. That way, when seeds come up in the garden, he will be able to look at the labeled seedlings in the flats and know what he is looking for in the garden.

Transplanting from flats also has its tricks. When transplanting tomatoes, petunias, marigolds or even cucumber seedlings, mulch the young plants after setting them in the ground. Use two to three inches of pine needles to retain moisture and, at the same time, allow for aeration of the soil's surface. Leaves or lawn clippings will prevent aeration and also attract slugs. If you are concerned about making your soil too acidic with pine needles, rake them up from the garden after the plants are established.

If your child plants in blocks rather than rows, and uses mulch throughout the growing season, there will be fewer weeds for him to eradicate. Like adults, a child will become discouraged if weeds persist

and eventually overrun the garden. Don't expect your child, in this first gardening experience, to take sole responsibility for keeping weeds out. Help him, but don't take full responsibility yourself, either.

Too many people plant their gardens in early spring and then fail to take advantage of planting times later in the season. July and early August are still good times to sow seeds of bolt-resistant lettuce, carrots and cucumbers as well as a second planting of peas and radishes—any vegetable, in fact, that will mature before the early autumn frosts in your area. Take up the old pea vines and put in the new lettuce.

My own inclination regarding chemicals and commercial fertilizers (other than those that are wholly organic) is to stay away from them completely. Use compost or decomposed cow manure to build the soil or to side-dress established plants. To control insects, show your child what beetles and bugs to look for and how he can kill them by hand. This approach can work in a small garden.

There is an interesting project your child might want to use for insect control. Some companies sell praying mantis egg sacs through the mail. If you order them in late winter, they will arrive in time for incubation. The maturing creatures can then be set loose at the appropriate time in your child's garden. While the praying mantis may not entirely rid the garden of insects, it will certainly help, and it will also add another interesting facet to your child's gardening knowledge.

Once the peas and beans and carrots are ready for harvesting, show your child how to gather the vegetables, and then show him how to cook them. Together, we harvested, blanched and then froze many of Nathaniel's beans. On more than one wintry evening we sat down to a meal, part of which was made up of his beans; he got more than a little pleasure out of that fact, and, of course, so did we.

You may not keep your child's Tonka toys out of your spinach, and he may still run amuck in that soft, newly turned earth, but with his own garden, you are helping him make a step in the right direction—toward respecting nature, the soil and the plants that give us food. Show your child the joys of gardening, and you have given him a gift for life. ●

Gordon Hayward, a frequent contributor to *Horticulture*, has a one-man garden restoration and landscaping business in southeastern Vermont.

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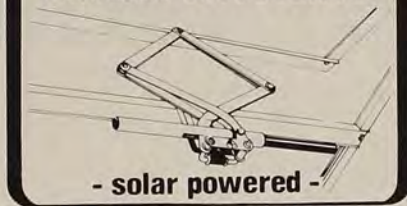
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Admission fees: Garden only: adults \$2.00, students and senior citizens \$1.50, children under 12 \$.50. House and garden: adults \$3.50, students and senior citizens \$2.50, children under 12 \$1.00. For more information write Ladew Topiary Gardens Foundation, 3535 Jarrettsville Pike, Monkton, MD 21111, (301) 557-9466.

EPIMEDIUMS

The following companies offer a good selection of species and cultivars of *Epimedium*.

Carroll Gardens, PO Box 310, 444 East Main Street, Westminster, MD 21157, catalogue free.

Daystar (formerly The Rock Garden), Litchfield-Hallowell Road, R.F.D. 2, Litchfield, ME 04350, catalogue \$1.00.

Russell Graham, 4030 Eagle Crest Road, N.W., Salem, OR 97304, catalogue \$2.00.

Milaeger's Gardens, 4338 Douglas Avenue, Racine, WI 53402, catalogue \$1.00.

Andre Viette Farm and Nursery, Route 1, Box 16, Fishersville, VA 22939, catalogue \$1.00.

The Wayside Gardens Company, Hodges, SC 29695, catalogue \$1.00.

White Flower Farm, Litchfield, CT 06759, catalogue \$5.00.

CHILDREN & GARDENING

The Youth Gardening Book, a publication from Gardens for All/The National Association for Gardening, is an excellent resource for teachers, parents and grandparents wishing to instill a love of gardening in a child. In addition to idea- and information-filled chapters on planning, site development, design and indoor gardening, the book includes a chapter with over 50 specific activities and projects designed to introduce children and young adults to gardening. The 145-page book also includes an excellent resource list with books for young gardeners, teachers and parents, as well as general sources for information.

The Youth Gardening Book is available from the Society for \$8.95, including postage and handling. To order a copy write Deborah Harpster, American Horticultural Society, PO Box 0105, Mount Vernon, VA 22121.

Children's Gardening Tools

Children's gardening tools are available from Smith & Hawken, 25 Corte Madera, Mill Valley, CA 94941. Their catalogue is free.

THE SPURGE FAMILY

Members of the euphorbia family mentioned in this month's "Strange Relatives" are available from the following nurseries.

Plants

Altman Specialty Plants, 26963 Sea Vista Drive, Malibu, CA 90265, catalogue \$1.00.

Country Hills Greenhouse, Route 2, Corning, OH 43730, catalogue \$2.50.

Grigsby Cactus Gardens, 2354 Bella Vista Drive, Vista, CA 92083, catalogue \$1.00.

Logee's Greenhouses, 55 North Street, Danielson, CT 06239, catalogue \$2.50.

Louisiana Nursery, Route 7, Box 43, Opelousas, LA 70570, catalogue \$2.00.

Singers' Growing Things, 17806 Plummer Street, Northridge, CA 91324, catalogue \$1.50.

Seed

Thompson and Morgan, PO Box 100, Farmingdale, NJ 07727, catalogue free.

J. L. Hudson, Seedsman, PO Box 1058, Redwood City, CA 94064, catalogue \$1.00.

CROWN-IMPERIAL

Bulbs

Breck's, 6523 North Galena Road, Peoria, IL 61632, catalogue free.

W. Atlee Burpee Company, Warminster, PA 18991, catalogue free.

C. A. Cruickshank, Ltd., 1015 Mount Pleasant Road, Toronto, Ontario, M4P 2M1 Canada, catalogue free.

Dutch Gardens, PO Box 400, Montvale, NJ 07645, catalogue free.

Geo. W. Park Seed Company, Inc., PO Box 31, Greenwood, SC 29647, catalogue free.

Royal Gardens, Royal Gardens USA Receiving Office, PO Box 588, Farmingdale, NJ 07727, catalogue free.

John Scheepers, Inc., Flower Bulb Specialist, 63 Wall Street, New York, NY 10005, catalogue free.

Seed

Thompson and Morgan, PO Box 100, Farmingdale, NJ 07727, catalogue free.

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Pronunciation Guide

The accent, or emphasis, falls on the syllable that appears in capital letters. The vowels that you see standing alone are pronounced as follows:

i—short sound; sounds like i in “hit”
o—long sound; sounds like o in “snow”
a—long sound; sounds like a in “hay”

Acalypha hispida
ack-ah-LIFF-ah HISS-pid-ah
A. wilkesiana a. WILK-see-ay-nah
Acanthophyllum gypsophiloides
ah-can-tho-PHYLL-um
gyp-so-phil-oh-EYE-deez
Achillea millefolium
a-KILL-ee-ah mil-eh-FO-lee-um
Alchemilla mollis al-che-MILL-ah MOLL-iss
Allium flavum AL-ee-um FLAY-vum
A. moly a. MOLL-ee
A. senescens var. *glaucum*
a. se-NESS-senz GLAW-cum
Andromeda an-DRO-me-da
Artemisia abrotanum
ar-tem-EES-ee-ah ab-ro-TAY-num
A. absinthium a. ab-SIN-thee-um
A. dracunculus a. dra-KUN-kew-luss
A. vulgaris a. vul-GAY-riss
Asclepias tuberosa
ass-KLEE-pee-us too-bur-O-sa
Astilbe taquetii ah-STILL-be ta-QUET-ee-eye
Berberis thunbergii
BER-ber-iss thun-BERG-ee-eye
Bergenia ber-GEN-ee-ah
Campanula persicifolia
kam-PAN-yew-la per-si-ci-FOL-ee-ah
Capparis spinosa cap-PAR-iss spin-OSS-ah
Catalpa ka-TAL-pa
Centaurea montana
cen-TAW-ree-ah mon-TAN-ah
Centranthus ruber cen-TRAN-thuss REW-ber
Ceratostigma plumbaginoides
cer-at-oh-STIG-ma
plume-bag-in-oh-EYE-deez
Chrysanthemum balsamita
kris-AN-thee-mum bal-SAM-it-ah
C. parthenium c. par-THEN-ee-um
C. X superbum c. sue-PER-bum
Cimicifuga sim-i-si-FOO-ga
Clethra alnifolia KLETH-ra all-ni-FOE-lee-ah
Codiaeum variegatum
co-DI-ee-um var-i-GAY-tum
Convallaria majalis
con-va-LAIR-ee-ah ma-JAY-liss
Cotoneaster divaricatus
ko-TOE-nee-ass-ter di-var-i-CAT-us
Crataegus laevigata
cra-TEE-gus lee-vi-GAY-ta
C. oxyacantha c. ox-ya-CAN-tha
Cryptomeria japonica
krip-toe-MEER-ee-ah ja-PON-i-ka

Dianthus dy-AN-thuss
Echinacea purpurea
eck-in-AY-see-ah pur-pur-EE-ah
Echinops ECK-i-nops
Epimedium X rubrum
ep-i-MEAD-ee-um REW-brum
E. grandiflorum e. grand-i-FLOOR-um
E. perralderanum e. per-ral-der-AY-num
E. pinnatum e. pin-NAY-tum
E. sulphureum e. sul-FUR-ee-um
E. X versicolor e. ver-si-KOL-or
E. X youngianum e. yung-ee-AY-num
Erigeron karvinskianus
er-IJ-er-on kar-vin-ski-AY-nuss
Eschscholzia ess-KOLTZ-ee-ah
Euphorbia fulgens yew-FOR-bee-ah FUL-jens
E. lathyris e. la-THY-rus
E. marginata e. mar-gin-AY-ta
E. milii e. MILL-ee-eye
E. obesa e. oh-BEE-sah
E. pulcherrima e. pull-KER-rim-ah
Filipendula vulgaris
fill-i-PEND-you-la vul-GAY-riss
Fritillaria imperialis
frit-ill-AY-ree-ah im-peer-ee-AY-liss
F. maxima f. MAX-i-ma
Gaillardia ga-LAR-dee-ah
Gaura lindheimeri GAU-ra lind-HEIM-er-eye
Geranium pratense
jer-AY-nee-um pray-TEN-see
G. sanguineum g. san-GWIN-ee-um
Hamamelis ham-ah-ME-lis
Helenium hell-EN-ee-um
Heuchera sanguinea
HEWK-er-ah san-GWIN-ee-ah
Hosta lancifolia HOSS-ta lan-ci-FO-lee-ah
H. paniculata h. pan-ick-yew-LAY-ta
H. plantaginea h. plan-tadge-i-NEE-ah
Hydrangea anomala subsp. *petiolaris*
hy-DRAN-gee-ah ah-NOM-ah-la
pet-ee-o-LAIR-iss
Iberis sempervirens
EYE-ber-iss sem-per-VEER-enz
Iris germanica EYE-riss jer-MAN-i-ka
Kerria japonica CARE-ee-ah ja-PON-i-ka
Kniphofia knip-HO-fee-ah
Kolkwitzia Kolk-WIT-zee-ah
Laburnum X watereri
la-BUR-num WA-ter-er-eye
Lamium LAY-me-um
Lavandula la-VAN-du-la
Leucothoe lew-KO-tho-ee
Liriope ly-RY-o-pee
Lobularia maritima
lob-yew-LAIR-ee-ah ma-RIT-i-ma
Lonicera syringantha
lo-NISS-er-ah sy-ring-GAN-tha
Lychnis coronaria
LICK-niss cor-o-NAIR-ee-ah

Molinia caerulea mo-LIN-ee-ah see-REW-lee-ah
Monarda didyma mo-NARD-ah DID-i-ma
M. fistulosa m. fist-you-LO-sa
Nepeta faassenii ne-PEE-ta fa-as-SEN-ee-eye
Nicotiana ni-ko-ti-AY-na
Nierembergia near-em-BER-gee-ah
Onopordum acanthium
on-o-POR-dum ah-CAN-thee-um
Pachysandra terminalis
pak-i-SAN-dra ter-min-AY-liss
Pedilanthus tithymaloides
ped-ill-LAN-thuss ti-thy-mal-oh-EYE-deez
Philadelphus fill-i-DELL-fuss
Phlox divaricata FLOCKS dy-vair-i-KAY-ta
Phyllanthus acidus phy-LAN-thuss ah-CID-uss
P. arbuscula p. are-BUS-kew-la
P. X elongatus p. e-lon-GAY-tuss
P. emblica p. EMB-li-cah
P. epiphyllanthus p. ep-i-phyll-AN-thuss
Platycodon grandiflorus
plat-ee-CO-don grand-i-FLOOR-us
Primula auricula
PRIM-yew-la aw-RICK-you-la
Pulmonaria officinalis
pull-mon-AIR-ee-ah o-fiss-i-NAL-iss
Pyracantha py-ra-KAN-tha
Rhododendron viscosum
ro-do-DEN-dron vis-KO-sum
Ricinus communis ri-SIN-us co-MUNE-iss
Rosa centifolia RO-sa cent-i-FOL-ee-ah
R. gallica r. GAL-i-ka
Rudbeckia laciniata
rood-BECK-ee-ah la-sin-ee-AY-ta
Salvia argentea SAL-vee-ah ar-JEN-te-ah
Sarcococca sar-ko-KOKE-ah
Skimmia SKIM-ee-ah
Stachys byzantina STACK-iss bi-zan-TY-na
Stewartia stew-ART-ee-ah
Stokesia STOKES-ee-ah
Streptizia stre-LITZ-ee-ah
Syringa vulgaris sa-RING-ga vul-GAY-ris
Tagetes filifolia ta-GEE-teez fill-i-FOL-ee-ah
Tanacetum vulgare
tan-ah-CET-um vul-GARE-ee
Taxus cuspidata TAX-us cuss-pid-AY-ta
Thymus THY-mus/TY-mus
Trachycarpus fortunei
tray-chy-CAR-pus FORTUNE-eye
Tradescantia tray-des-KAN-tee-ah
Tsuga canadensis SUE-ga can-ah-DEN-sis
Veronica incana ver-ON-i-ka in-CAN-ah
V. teucrium v. teu-CREE-um
Viburnum carlesii vy-BUR-num KARLS-ee-eye
Vinca VIN-ka
Viola tricolor vy-O-la/vee-O-la TRI-color
Weigela wy-JELL-ah
Wisteria sinensis wiss-TEER-ee-ah sy-NEN-sis
Zantedeschia elliottiana
zan-ta-DES-kee-ah ELLIOT-ti-ay-nah

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Crown-Imperial

F*ritillaria imperialis*, commonly called crown-imperial, has the distinction of being considered the “lily of the Bible” by some writers. While there is no proof that this hardy species once grew in Palestine (though other members of the genus are found there), its existence and popularity in other parts of the world have been well documented throughout history.

Crown-imperial was introduced into western Europe by D. l’Ecluse, who sent it to Vienna in 1576. Gerard described it in his *Herbal* in 1597: “This rare and strange Plant is called in Latine, Corona Imperialis, and Lilium Byzantium. The vertue of this admirable plant is not yet knowne, neither his faculties or temperature in working.” John Parkinson thought so highly of crown-imperial that he mentioned it in his first chapter of *Paradisi in Sol* (1629): “The Crown Imperiall for his stately beautifullnesse deserveth the first place in this our Garden of delight.” Shakespeare was undoubtedly interested in this flower, too; in *The Winter’s Tale*, crown-imperial is among Perdita’s flowers. During Shakespeare’s time the plant was imported to



Barbara W. Ellis

ABOVE: *Fritillaria imperialis*, crown-imperial. LEFT: *F. imperialis* ‘Lutea’.



Fritillaria imperialis L. CROWN-IMPERIAL. Bulb to 6 in. across, scales several, st. 2-4 ft., leafy, plant with skunklike odor; lvs. alt., lanceolate, to 6 in. long; fls. red-orange, to 2¼ in. long, pendent on curved pedicels, in a whorl below a tuft of lvs., at the end of a naked, terminal peduncle, filaments glabrous, style 3-parted. N. India, Afghanistan, Iran. Cvs. include: ‘Aurea’, fls. red-orange; ‘Chitralensis’, less vigorous, fls. butter-yellow; ‘Lutea’, fls. yellow; ‘Maxima’ (*F. maxima* Hort.), strong-growing form with orange-red fls; ‘Rubra’, fls. very large, red; ‘Sulphurea’, fls. sulphur-yellow. An interesting, old-fashioned plant, persisting for years.

—Hortus Thrid

Horticultural Photography, Corvallis, Oregon

England from Persia, where it grew wild.

In the New World, crown-imperial was probably first grown by the Dutch settlers in New Amsterdam; Dutch housewives included it in a list of flowers grown in the settlement. George Washington had a special area set aside in his garden for exotics, including crown-imperial, according to the Mount Vernon domestic records.

Thomas Jefferson was obviously much taken with this bulb as well; it is mentioned 11 times in his *Garden Book*. It also appears in 1786 in a list of plants he sent to Francis Eppes from Paris. In 1806 Bernard MacMahan, a seedsman and florist from Philadelphia, sent a copy of the *American Gardener’s Calendar* with his compliments to Jefferson, thus initiating a long correspondence. (MacMahan’s *Calendar*

was one of the first books to deal with gardening in this country.) Jefferson wrote to MacMahan several times over the course of five years, requesting that a bulb of crown-imperial be sent along with other roots and bulbs. In one letter he wrote, “I have an extensive flower border, in which I am fond of placing handsome plants or fragrant.”

Unfortunately, Mr. Jefferson seemed to have a talent for requesting the plant at the wrong time of the year. In 1809, MacMahan wrote, “The Crown Imperial roots, as well as all my hardy bulbs, I planted in the fall, and taking them up before their bloom and subsequent decay of foliage would ruin them. In July or August I can furnish you with a great variety.” Finally, in September of 1812, MacMahan wrote,

"I do myself the pleasure of sending you by this mail a small box of 3 roots of Crown Imperial which carry two tiers of flowers when in very luxuriant growth. Please to have them planted as soon as possible." One month later, MacMahan reported, "I am sending you a small box containing bulbs and one root of silver striped Crown Imperial." By 1816 Jefferson finally had enough crown-imperial plants to divide his clump; he sent one bulb to his sister.

From a rare plant appearing in gentlemen's gardens, crown-imperial worked its way down the social ladder to the cottage garden. In 1883 William Robinson wrote in *The English Flower Garden*, "It is a valuable plant, being stately, curiously interesting and a fine plant for the mixed border and the shrubbery. Its best place, perhaps, is in a group on the fringe of the shrubbery or a group of American plants. This is essentially a garden plant, their strong odour being against them when gathered." By 1897, when Mrs. C. W. Earle wrote her first *Pot Pourri From a Surrey Garden*, the crown-imperial had become commonplace: "In my youth these were rather sniffed at and called a cottage plant. I wonder if anyone who thought them vulgar ever took the trouble to pick off one of the down-hanging bells and turn it up to see the six drops of clear water in the six white cups?" A reader, objecting to Mrs. Earle's reference to the beads of liquid in the hanging flowers as "water" and not "honey," recounted the following legend: "When our Lord in his agony was walking in the Garden of Gethsemane, all the flowers save this one bowed their heads in sympathetic sorrow. It held its head aloft in supreme disdain, whereupon our Lord gently rebuked it. Smitten with shame, at last it hung its head, and since then has never been able to raise it and those who care to turn its face upwards always find tears in its eyes." According to Persian legend, a queen's fidelity was unjustly doubted by her husband, much to her sorrow and anguish. An angel took pity on her and changed her into the crown-imperial. Until restored to her husband her tears will remain.

Perhaps no one has been as ardent an admirer of crown-imperial over the years as Mrs. Francis King, who, in her 1925 *Chronicles of the Garden*, wrote, "... magnificent . . . gorgeous . . . flowers light the borders like torches. Gives a glow, such a light as I never saw equalled. . . ."

Though seldom seen in gardens today, crown-imperial is a hardy bulb of easy cul-

ture. Available in red, orange and yellow, it thrives in rich soil. The plant is propagated by offsets, and, rarely, by seeds. Planted in the fall at a depth of six inches, the plants may be left undisturbed for several years. When they become crowded, they should be lifted after the foliage has ripened, divided and reset in fresh soil. In Zone 7, they bloom from mid-April to May and are hardy from Zone 5 south.

When planting crown-imperial, prepare the bed at least one week before planting time in the fall. Plant the bulbs as soon as they arrive (you will have ordered them early!), choosing a spot in sun or partial shade. Dig a hole 12 inches wide and 12 inches deep for each bulb. Properly planted, crown-imperial will grow to be 18 to 28 inches tall, so select a site in the middle or back of the border. To the soil add compost or leaf mold, one cup of sand and one-half cup of bone meal. (In place of compost or leaf mold, you may use well-rotted sawdust or peat moss.) The goal is a soft, friable and spongy bed. No amount of subsequent care is as important as this preparation. Spread the roots around and cover them with six inches of soil. Mound the soil up (it will settle) and water well. After the ground freezes, mulch with old and well-rotted manure or any other organic mulch. Remove the flower stalk when the blossoms fade, and allow the foliage to ripen. Label each bulb, since the foliage will disappear. Bulbs may be overplanted with annuals.

You may also want to plant bulbs where you have been troubled by moles and mice. Crown-imperial is often called the mole plant, because its skunk-like odor (described as "foxy" by the British) discourages moles as well as mice who use the mole runs. This bulb is poisonous and provides a contrast to sweet-smelling spring bulbs. While it is largely the bulb that has the strong odor, the flowers may also have this scent to a certain degree, depending on sun and wind conditions.

For a beautiful and unusual display of spring flowers, consider growing crown-imperial, a plant rich not only in beauty but also in history and tradition. ❶

—Easter Berryman Martin

Easter Berryman Martin has gardened on three continents and in five countries. She now lives in Orange County, Virginia on the Rapidan River. Her articles have appeared in the journals of the Herb Society of America, The Garden Club of Virginia and the Garden Club of America.

Horticultural Explorations



NEW ZEALAND (Oct. 16-Nov. 1)

Enjoy the horticultural wonders of New Zealand at the peak of springtime. Visit the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust and the Otari Nature Plant Museum, and see lush public gardens and the wildflowers in Milford Sound. Also explore the famous cities of Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. See native Maori crafts and dancing.

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Fragrance

Drifting with the wind, changing with the seasons and the hours, fragrance is impossible to see or touch and almost as difficult to describe. Oddly enough, despite its mercurial and amorphous nature, the fragrance of plants can divide and define a garden's spaces. Whether the garden area is a corner redolent with musky *Phlox* or a woodland path turning toward the enveloping fragrance of *Viburnum carlesii*, its boundaries are as tangible as walls or hedges.

Like a change in paving or the introduction of stairs, fragrant plants can alter the rhythm of your progress through a garden—for example, *Iris germanica* calling for a pause along a path, or *Wisteria sinensis*, for a prolonged sojourn beneath an arbor.

Fragrant plants can be planted to lure one down paths, around corners and into alcoves, as well as to provide a reason to linger. One country garden I know uses broad sweeps of fragrance to embrace, surprise and entice, in a pleasant play upon the emotions. In May, a path leading from the house between hedgerows is practically enveloped with the airy sweetness of apple and lilac honeysuckle, *Lonicera syringantha*. While there are other ways to enter the garden, few visitors in May take them. Passing through the apple trees, the path curves around the balsamic darkness of a small pine grove, and a fragrance almost like a sorbet emerges to refresh the senses for the next fragrant onslaught—a cluster of *Syringa vulgaris* around a diminutive wildflower meadow.

Those visitors who linger on the meadow's stone bench can inhale the honey-almond scent of English hawthorn, *Crataegus laevigata* (formerly *C. oxyacantha*), from deep within the woods; in July, this pleasant odor is replaced with the clove-like fragrance of *Rhododendron viscosum* and the sweet, woody smell of *Clethra alnifolia*. In July and August, the fragrance of *C. alnifolia* is carried from the woods as far as the house. Over the years, it has lured many an unsuspecting guest down moonlit paths to search out its source.

How far a fragrance carries, along with personal preference (or abhorrence), will



FAR LEFT: The flowers and fragrance of *Wisteria* can be used to tempt the garden visitor to stop and rest beneath a vine-covered arbor. LEFT: Pungent *Nepeta* surrounding a stone bench at Nymans in England.

influence placement of fragrant plants. Some people, for example, find honeysuckle offensive, some enjoy it from a distance, while others prefer it wrapped around doorways so they can bury their noses in it when they pass.

Other fragrances, like the almost universally appreciated lily-of-the-valley, *Convallaria majalis*, are quiet. Like the fragrance, neither the flower nor the foliage of lily-of-the-valley jump out at you; instead, both await discovery, perhaps around a rock in a turn in the path or nestled beside a clump of ferns that will hide their often disreputable foliage toward summer's end.

When planning a garden for fragrance or when incorporating fragrance into an existing garden, it is a frequent temptation to add as many fragrant plants as space will allow. While this approach works fine for areas such as rose and herb gardens, where the melding of many compatible fragrances in the noonday sun is part of their charm, some plants cancel each other out or dominate (characteristics for which some of the *Philadelphus* clan are notorious). In a small garden, the more closely held fragrances of some lilies and iris can be all but lost to the heady fragrance of 'Conquette' or 'Innocence'.

Using fragrance in the garden—from finding the right corner along a path for the haunting fragrance of witch hazel, *Hamamelis* sp., to edging walks with lavender—can nurture memories for the future and breathe life into the past. Of all the senses, fragrance is the most memory evoking, like some strong elixir conjuring up even the most obscure of life's moments.

"All it takes is one whiff of lilac, and I can hear that wooden screen door slam as if it were yesterday," a city-bound friend once said wistfully as he reminisced about his childhood home in the country with its lilac-shaded porch.

Along with this rich imagery of the mind, there are the inevitable associations of fragrant plants with their natural habitats. For many people, the scent of *Clethra*, for example, is practically synonymous with streams and woods. Plant this common shrub in a border and, on a summer evening, with a free imagination, even a neighbor's vegetable garden could become a favorite woods from childhood. ●

—Margaret Hensel

Margaret Hensel is a landscape designer and writer who is a regular contributor to *American Horticulturist*.



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