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of Wake Forest University

Winter
2001

Gardener's

JOURNAL

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Why Do We Garden?

by **Diane Wise**, head horticulturist

It began so simply. Camilla and I were chatting about possible topics for my article for the *Gardener's Journal*. Naturally, conversation turned to our own gardens (yes, we all garden at home, too). We talked about our friends' gardens and how each one resembles its owner. We discussed gardening "passion"—that incredible need to work the soil that so many of us have—and the pleasure it brings. Somehow, during our exchange, I agreed to write the lead article for this *Journal*. My topic: "Why do we garden?" My problem: I'd never really thought about it!

So, here it is two months later, and it's time for me to put pen to paper (actually, fingers to keyboard). What have I learned? I've learned that there is no *single* reason why people garden! We gallivant around our gardens in heat, cold, wind, or rain for lots of reasons; reasons as varied as the gardeners. Working the soil meets different needs for each of us. In this article, I will discuss some of the more common reasons that people garden, and I will share what gardening means to me.

Jim Holmes, a member of Centenary United Methodist Church, gardens for probably the most basic reason there is: to provide food. Each year he and a host of volunteers from the church utilize formerly fallow land at the Methodist Children's Home to grow fresh produce for the Second Harvest Food Bank. Jim, who came up with the

idea, determines what vegetables will be planted, as well as organizes volunteers from various church groups to do all of the work involved. Their combined efforts during the past summer produced over 6,000 pounds of produce for the Food Bank to distribute to the hungry in our community. I'm not sure that Jim really considers himself a gardener or even that he really likes to garden. For him, the point is the harvest.

The need to create motivates many gardeners. These individuals are gratified most by the process of designing a garden, the creating of a personal statement. I know people who plan every phase of their garden on paper, considering each plant's height, color, and bloom time before ever touching the soil. They add, remove, and rearrange, continually refining the design, until pleased with the result, much as a painter does with oils or a sculptor with clay. In gardening, they are creating living works of art using their imagination and eye for color. Sometimes, if you're lucky, you encounter a gardener whose imagination has run completely amuck. They just don't see the world the way the rest of us do. Their gardens tend to be like "outsider" art—outrageous, wild, and over the top—full of objets trouvés (found objects) such as bones and bedsprings. They do things that the rest of us would never even consider. Camilla and I have a friend who has made this kind of garden, and we love it. It's fun and personal and looks just like her. It always makes us smile.

Then there are the plant addicts. Preston Stockton, our director, likes to garden because she

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LOVES plants. Even as a child, she was fascinated by their endless variety—their shapes, colors, textures—the funkier, the better. Preston always wanted to be a gardener—anything to get to play with all those neat plants—and never considered any other career. As you get to know her, you will begin to recognize her designs here at Reynolda. Her beds are always big, bright, and almost tropical in look. Recently, at the hairdresser's (where one can learn all sorts of things), I was introduced to a somewhat flamboyant woman who was sitting under the hairdryer. When she learned that I worked at the Gardens, she immediately asked me about several of our plantings that she particularly admired for their "outstanding color and bold statement." On and on she went, critiquing every part of the beds until it was time for me to leave. Needless to say, I passed her compliments on to the boss.

For some people gardening is about order. A friend of mine, who is a physician with a busy practice in oncology, gardens because it makes him feel "in control." Gardening is the one aspect of his life where things go pretty much as they're supposed to. He says that plants follow the rules: if the gardener does what he should, the plants do what they should. Unfortunately, oncology isn't like that; following the rules is not a guarantee of a positive result. The fact that, in gardening, effort equals reward restores balance to his life and allows him to continue in the inexact science of medicine. Interesting.

There are lots of other reasons that people garden such as stress relief and exercise. But none of these reasons really apply to me. I'm too lazy to grow food (Isn't that why we have the grocery store?); I do love plants but not in the way Preston does; I gave up trying to be in control a long time ago because I discovered it didn't work; and there are better ways to exercise. So, where does my passion come from? After twenty years in the non-profit sector, most of them in fundraising, why did I suddenly become a gardener? There's a very simple answer. Gardening is life-affirming.

The years 1990 through 1994 were very difficult for me as far as my health was concerned. I had a medical condition that required hospitalization monthly, usually for five to seven days at a time. On at least half a dozen occasions, those hospital

stays stretched to six or eight weeks. I didn't have a lot of visitors; I was way too sick for that, just my immediate family and very closest friends. Often I would lie in bed, afraid that I would never get out of the hospital. But then I found a way to leave in my mind. Guess where I would go? My garden. I would try to imagine it—you know, there's *Pulmonaria* 'Mrs. Moon' and *Phlox divaricata* 'Fuller's White' and *Trillium cuneatum*, all in front of the ostrich ferns. I would see it in bloom in the spring and changing colors in the fall and in the winter when the daphne and wintersweet are so fragrant. I would make long lists of tasks that needed to be done as soon as I got home, like pruning or mulching or moving those invasive asters. I'd have Preston and Camilla bring me plant and seed catalogues so that I could figure out what I needed to add to the wildflower garden or the perennial border or the viburnum collection. I walked through my garden several times a day, all in my mind. I knew that it was alive and, even when dormant, it was simply resting so that it could break through the soil and grow like mad, once spring came. My garden would endure, just as I hoped that I would endure. Corny as it sounds, it sustained me.

And that's when I discovered that gardening, for me, is about perspective. Alice Brown, a dear friend, was ill at the same time that I was, and we used to plan our hospital stays to coincide so that we could visit. During one of our last conversations, Alice said, "Diane, don't ever get so caught up in your illness that you forget that life is beautiful and that it goes on." Folks, that is why I garden. It is impossible to lose perspective in a garden. Every single garden I see reminds me that life goes on, with or without me, and life really *is* beautiful. And if I start to forget that, I simply look around Reynolda, and I'm back where I need to be.

For me, gardening is also about history and memories. I come from a long line of true Southern gardeners (true meaning they gardened in South Carolina, which is like gardening in Hell). Sometimes, I think that my need to garden is genetic; all of the women in my family, particularly my maternal grandmother, were serious gardeners. Grammy had a vegetable garden, a cutting garden, a camellia walk, a compost pile (before compost was cool), a small

fruit orchard, grapevines, the list goes on and on. I think that part of her interest in gardening came from the times in which she lived. There weren't a great number of acceptable activities for "well-bred" women born in 1900. Caring for your family, church work, and gardening were pretty much it. She certainly did the first two well, but gardening was what she truly enjoyed. Grammy had a gift: she knew what needed to be done, and when. Granted, she had a gentleman to help her with some things. For instance, Papa would not allow her to climb and shake the pecan trees; but the majority of the work that needed done in her garden, she did herself. I remember her in long sleeves, a hat, and gloves standing over her compost pile in the middle of August. Hot, sweaty, or glowing, as she called it ("horses sweat, men perspire, ladies glow"), covered in bits of compost, Grammy would have this huge smile on her face as she stirred and turned and tried to get the "mix" just right. Her garden was always full of blooms, regardless of the season, which she would cut and bring into the house—a camellia to float in a cut glass bowl on the piano, a slip of lily-of-the-valley to place next to her bed, or a big, loose bouquet of roses for the dining room table. During the summer, I would go to sleep in my mother's old bedroom on ironed linen sheets, cradled in the fragrance wafting in from the huge gardenia outside the window. On moonlit nights, the blossoms seemed to glow and shimmer in the dark, and I knew my dreams would be calm and restful.

To this day, I'm amazed how vivid these memories have remained. The scent of certain flowers, like a gardenia, stock, or lily of the valley, brings all of them back in a rush of pleasure. Maybe in gardening, I'm trying to recreate some of those simpler times. I'd like to think that I have Grammy's gift and that I'm using it to good advantage here at Reynolda Gardens. But I don't know. Gardening simply makes me feel peaceful and reminds me that I'm alive. It also makes me feel close to Grammy. And that's enough. ☺



Basil, King of Herbs

by **Lisa Phillips**, horticulturist

Most herbs have a well-known meaning attached to them. Rosemary is for remembrance, sage is for wisdom, and thyme is for courage. What about basil? Its name comes from the Latin word *basilicon* meaning king; and therefore it is known as the king of herbs, but it has no clear symbolic meaning.

Basil has been an herb of many faces. In India, it was placed on the chest of Hindus to ward off evil in the afterlife and was also used as a sign of hospitality. In Europe, it was believed that scorpions lived under the pots and so it was an evil plant that drew like to itself. Early Greek and Roman physicians claimed that to ward off basil's evil you must yell and curse while planting basil seeds, which gave rise to the French phrase "semer le basilic" (sowing the basil), an idiom for raving mad. The Italians believed basil was a symbol of love; if a young woman placed a pot of basil on her balcony, it meant she was expecting her suitor to come calling. Now, as one of the most popular garden herbs in America, basil's numerous cultivars are widely appreciated for their appearance, flavor and scent. Three of my favorites are 'Sweet Genovese', 'Purple Ruffles', and lemon basil.

***Ocimum basilicum* 'Sweet Genovese'**

'Sweet Genovese' is a wonderful cultivar. It is very attractive in the garden, and its bright green, puckered foliage looks good even in the hottest summer months when so many herbs are looking tattered. 'Genovese' basil grows up to two feet tall and has a neat, rounded form. This is one of the best basil for pesto and other Italian dishes.

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***Ocimum basilicum* 'Purple Ruffles'**

'Purple Ruffles' is my favorite. Its dark, ruffled, burgundy leaves seem to dress up any area in which it is planted, and it also makes a bold contrast against the bright green of 'Genovese' or the gray fuzzy leaves of a sage or lamb's ears. 'Purple Ruffles' is great for garnishing a platter and is a flavorful addition to cold dishes and vegetables.



THE HERB GARDEN AT REYNOLDA.

***Ocimum americanum* Lemon Basil**

This basil has small, pale green leaves and truly accents a planting of dark foliage plants. Lemon basil is an excellent seasoning for shrimp scampi, and it also imparts a wonderful flavor when rubbed on chicken or fish before grilling. Lemon basil, as well as any other basil, with its combination clove-like, peppery, licorice-mint fragrance also makes a wonderful addition to potpourri.

This basil has small, pale green leaves and truly accents a planting of dark foliage plants. Lemon basil is an excellent seasoning for shrimp scampi, and it also imparts a wonderful flavor when rubbed on chicken or fish before grilling. Lemon basil, as well as any other



SWEET BASIL (*OCIMUM BASILICUM*)

Basilis are very easy to grow from seed. Sow seed indoors about four weeks before the last frost date for an early start, or simply sow seed outdoors in the spring after the ground has warmed. Plant basil where it will receive at least six hours of sun in well-drained soil, and keep it moist. As long as you are able to leave at least four true leaves on a stem, harvest basil whenever you would like to enjoy its virtues. Pinching off the flower buds as they form (and a few extra leaves for dinner) will actually encourage bushiness. Basil is an annual and will not survive freezing temperatures, so grow some in a sunny windowsill for use through the winter.

While basil may not have one universal symbolic meaning, it most often reminds me of warmth and sunshine, fitting qualities for a true king of herbs. ☺

To the Rescue

by Tom Pratt, greenhouse manager

Over the past year or so I have had more and more help with watering the plants in our greenhouses. Oddly my help was not coming from fellow staff members. It was coming directly from the "heavens above"—literally. You see, our greenhouses had developed several problem areas. All these problems were getting worse with each season. We needed help!

The glass houses that needed the most work were the three growing houses plus a small passageway that serves as our interior plant sales area. Records tell us that these houses were last covered back in the 1060s. Other documentation

shows that the overall structure was changed then as well. Originally, all of the growing houses had curved sides like those presently seen on our retail house. The side vents were somewhat different also, with small push-out windows set into glass panels. Preston Stockton, our director, feels that these changes were made because curved glass was very expensive.

In my *Gardener's Journal* article this past summer I referenced several areas of greenhouse maintenance, one of those being reskinning. This term, used in the greenhouse industry, means to replace the exterior covering. Most of today's greenhouses are covered in glass, plastic film, or hard plastic (PVC). With time and the elements of weather, greenhouse covers, regardless of type, will break down, crack, and deteriorate. When cover decline occurs, greenhouses lose efficiency in heat,

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photosynthesis, production, and—last but not least—safety. After close inspection, we decided it was time to reskin here at Reynolda.

The task of finding help to reskin our houses was not easy. It seems greenhouse-refurbishing businesses are small in number. With a few references in, calls were put out for help. In the end the contract for work was awarded to Ludy Greenhouse Manufacturing Corporation out of New Madison, Ohio. We had used this company in the summer of 1995 to reskin the small greenhouse at the front of the complex, and their work proved to be satisfactory. On the morning of October ninth, a crew of three men arrived at Reynolda to start work. The weather was great, and the work went fairly smoothly. The old glass was first removed and discarded. There were a few loud cracks and bangs, but all glass was collected. Next the exterior frames were power washed to remove the old caulking. Finally the clean frames were caulked, and the new glass was laid.

Our new glass houses look great, and the new glass is already making a big difference. The reduction in heating bills lets us know now that the cost outlay to reskin will soon be recouped through energy savings. Plus, the new houses are much brighter, which will make for stronger and healthier plants. And the houses are safer because tempered glass (glass that has been refined at high temperatures) was used in compliance with new industry codes. In the event of breakage, tempered glass shatters into pea-size pieces.

Looking ahead, plans are already underway to reskin the conservatory within the next two years. But for now all are invited to come out and see the new digs. 🍷



WORKMAN PREPARES FRAME FOR NEW GLASS AS PART OF LAST SUMMER'S GREENHOUSE RESKINNING PROJECT.

A Little of Reynolda for Your Home Reynolda Village Entrance Isl and Bed

by **Preston Stockton**, *director*

One of the fun challenges of working at Reynolda Gardens is to sit down each winter and design the annual beds for the next growing season. The largest beds we plant are the island bed at the entrance to Reynolda Village and the city bed across from the entrance to the Wake Forest campus. The bed in Reynolda Village is a challenge because it is viewed from two sides. Visitors often ask about this planting because they think that they would like to reproduce it at home. They are often amazed that this entire bed is planted in annuals because many of the plants grow so large in one season.

We plant the island bed with annuals for several reasons. First, we like to be able to plant pansies and tulips for early spring bloom. It is easier to completely take out the plantings and not have to plant around perennials or shrubs. Second, we find that the proper selection of annuals gives us a very long and profuse blooming period, and we do not need to replant the bed for a fall display. We try to avoid the “mum” word if possible! And third, as typical gardeners, we do like to slightly change the plantings from year to year so we don't get bored.

The soil in this bed is in good condition. Several years ago we reworked it with plenty of compost. We lime it once a year in the fall. By the first of May, the pansies and tulips are ready to come out, and it is warm enough for the annuals to go in. Remember that most summer annuals like warm soil in order to grow, so we don't push the season by planting too early. One thing we do consider in our planning is that we will spend a day of playing “information please” while we plant! You can't believe the number of people who drive through Reynolda Village in a day. We give directions, lunch suggestions, gardening advice, catch up with old friends, tell the Reynolds family history, and explain what we are planting *this* year. We also hear the likes and dislikes of the bed last year. In the middle of all this socializing, we lay out the bed before planting. It is very important to think about how large each plant will grow by the end of the season. Proper spacing

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is crucial for each plant to perform up to its potential and for an optimal show. This bed always looks a little sparse right after planting, but it does not take long for it to fill in.

There are three things to remember when planting annuals: proper selection of the plant, plenty of water, and regular fertilization. We look for several things with plant selection. The first is to consider the growing conditions. The island bed is in hot, full sun, which is fine for some plants but not others. We want most of the plants to have a long blooming period. We also take into account the texture of each plant, height, and flower or leaf color. This bed is nine feet in width but one hundred and twelve feet long. Because of the large scale of this bed, we are able to choose plants of various sizes and textures to complement each other.

PLANT SELECTION FOR SUMMER AND FALL OF 2000

Tall Plants for the Middle

Yellow *Brugmansia*

Angel's Trumpet
 Large, bold leaves and flowers.



ISLAND BED AT REYNOLDA VILLAGE ENTRANCE

Pennisetum setaceum rubra

Purple Fountain Grass
 Beautiful burgundy foliage and plumes.

***Cleome* 'White Queen'**

Spider Flower
 A beautiful and interesting flower, but warning: This plant often "seeds off," meaning you will have hundreds (and I mean hundreds) of seedlings the next year.

***Celosia* 'Purple Flamingo'**

Cockscomb
 Beautiful purple foliage and flowers. Also a problem with seeding off.

Costa Rican Salvia

Blooms late summer with stunning cobalt blue flowers.

***Salvia* 'Van Houttei'**

Maroon flowers that are great for fall color.

Intermediate-size Plants

***Salvia* 'Indigo Spires'**

Spiraling deep blue spikes of flowers. Good for cutting.

***Salvia* 'White Nymph' and *S.* 'Coral Nymph'**

Spikes of white and coral-pink respectively. Be sure to give good drainage.

***Ageratum* 'Blue Horizon'**

A larger selection of the old garden standby. Grows to three feet. Good for cutting.

***Gomphrena* 'Bicolor Rose'**

Globe Amaranth
 Nice deep pink flowers.

Plumbago carpensis

Lovely light blue blooms all summer.

Low Plants

Creeping Gold *Lantana*

Very heat and drought tolerant. Space at least two to three feet apart.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Annual Vinca

White and pink. Very tough and drought resistant. Must have good drainage. Can be found at any garden shop.

All of these plants are easy to grow. To get the best performance they will need to be fertilized several times during the growing season. Before planting, the gardens' staff will fertilize the plants with a liquid fertilizer. We then mix an organic fertilizer called Plantone in each of the planting holes. About one week to ten days later, we lightly fertilize each plant with 10-10-10 and repeat every month until the bed is taken out. You may want to consider using a timed-release fertilizer, a six- to nine-month Osmocote, for example. This is more expensive, but it will last through the growing season. Remember, to keep annuals blooming you must keep them growing, and they need constant fertilization in order to do that.

Proper watering is the last key to a beautiful bed. There is no use in going through all of this trouble if you are not willing to keep the plants watered during hot and dry periods in the summer. Remember that we do live in the South. If we do not get at least one inch of rain each week, you should get out the sprinkler and water thoroughly. This keeps the plants healthy by preventing water stress and by washing the fertilizer through the root zone.

The hardest part of this whole venture may be finding the plants. Many of these plants can be easily found at our local garden shops. Most of the salvias can be found at the farmers' market off Sandy Ridge Road. There are some great vendors who set up there and offer a nice selection of plants. Cleome and celosia are best sown directly in the soil where they are to grow. The seeds can be found at Park Seed Company in Greenwood, S.C. Reynolda Gardens offers a sale of annual plants each April. Most of the plants we use in the island bed will be offered for sale, with a bonus of a free lecture! With a little effort, I think you will be pleased with what you can buy locally. ☺

A Different View

by **John Kiger**, assistant director

The 2000 gardening season brought forth changes to the vegetable garden. First, I improved the signage throughout the garden, creating easier to read labels with small but useful tips on the various plants and planting procedures. When you visit please remember this is an ongoing venture and that it will take time to create adequate labels for everything.

Second, I established a garden plot that provides produce for the Second Harvest Food Bank. Staff members and volunteers grew and donated lettuce,



SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK PLOT

onions, and green beans. At this writing, there are approximately 1,200 onions growing on the site for spring harvest. This being our first year producing for the Food Bank, we didn't keep exact accounts of poundage of goods donated, but starting next year I hope to provide accurate records.

The last change was in myself. As you may or may not know, Reynolda Gardens was originally used as an experimental garden to grow new and unusual crops, providing information on those grown and distributing its findings to the farming community. Today we carry on this tradition by displaying a wide array of new and interesting plants. I had to change my way of thinking when it came to growing these unusual varieties. As a child I was practically raised in a garden or in tobacco fields in Yadkin County. In addition to tobacco, we grew the standard crops such as green beans, tomatoes, summer squash, cucumbers, beets, potatoes, corn, and turnips, all of which my mother either canned or froze. At that time in my

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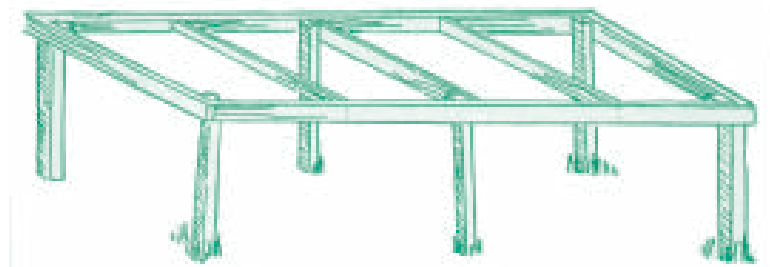


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CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE

life, a green bean was just that, a green bean. Variety wasn't something that interested a ten-year-old. Thirty-two years later, I find that, in keeping with the historic values of Reynolda Gardens, unusual varieties do matter. I would like to give you my personal perspective on some of the things we grew this year, starting with heirloom tomatoes.

Tomatoes

I ordered my seeds from Seed Savers. I was amazed at all they offered, and it was difficult deciding which ones to order. I had a list of those grown in 1999 but wanted to purchase different varieties, although I did order a couple of the requested ones such as 'Mortgage Lifter' and 'Brandywine'. In all, we grew twelve different varieties consisting of 100 plants per variety, which we sold at our annual heirloom tomato plant sale. In the garden the volunteers and I planted a total of thirty-nine tomato plants of these varieties: 'Principe Borghese', 'Black Plum', 'Ganti', 'Mortgage Lifter', 'Mule Team', 'Boxcar Willie', 'Sunpride', 'Aunt Ruby's German Green', 'Striped Cavem', 'Marizol Gold', and 'Brandywine'. With the exception of 'Principe Borghese' (a small salad type tomato), and 'Black Plum' (best used for making sauce), those listed above provided baseball-size and larger fruits.

Two of my favorites, and I highly recommend them, are 'Aunt Ruby's German Green' and 'Marizol Gold'. Each of these has its own unique taste and color. Speaking of color, the key word in 'Aunt Ruby's German Green', is green. These tomatoes will not turn red as a few of my friends and family members have found out. When this tomato is ripe, the skin turns a greenish yellow color and is soft to the touch.

The method of planting tomatoes varies from one person to the other. I use a posthole digger to dig the holes and bury three-fourths of the plant, leaving one-fourth protruding above ground. This technique of planting reduces water requirements and allows the plant to produce more roots.

Nourishment at the time of planting consists of bone meal, which is mixed into the soil. Bone meal is a product that is high in phosphorus and aids in the production of healthy roots and fruits. Passers-by questioned my use of bone meal while urging me to use lime instead; however, I cited a previous soil test that revealed an existing pH of 6.4. Since tomatoes are a somewhat acid-loving plant, I felt an additional application of lime would be detrimental to the plants' production. Once the plants were established, a nitrogen-rich fertilizer was applied to produce vigorous growth. Fertilization throughout the growing season consisted of Miracle-Gro for Tomatoes. If you wish to order seeds from Seed Savers, please visit their website: www.seedsavers.com.

Green Beans

For all of you who like 'Blue Lake', 'White Half Runner', or 'Tenderette', you owe it to yourself to try a 'Rattlesnake Snap Green Bean' from Seed Savers. This pole variety is truly worthy of growing in the garden and is said to be drought resistant. Plants grow to ten feet plus in height, and produce a bean that, when mature, is between five to seven inches long and streaked with purple. In my opinion, the taste is far superior to the three I mentioned above.

Peanuts

Peanuts are not that unusual, but it is unusual to find them growing in this area. Never let anyone tell you peanuts will not grow here. It is true that to successfully grow them, you need well-worked soil with good drainage. Peanut "seed" can be purchased at your local grocery store, but remember to purchase the raw ones. Once you get home, shell the ones you want to plant and soak them for twenty-four hours prior to planting and then enjoy the ones you have left over. Soil temperature at the time of planting is critical. Seeds will not germinate unless the soil temperature has reached sixty to sixty-five degrees.

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The Horticulture Detective Identification of Existing Climbing Roses

by **Camilla Wilcox**, *curator of education*

Planting time of mid- to late May is recommended. It takes the plant ninety to 120 days to mature. As the plants grow, pull soil gently around them and fertilize with 10-10-10 three to four times during the growing season. At the time of harvest, the plants start to droop and yellow. Pull up the entire plant, leaving the peanuts attached, and hang the plant in a dry, well-ventilated area for one to two weeks. With the first stage of the drying process complete, remove the peanuts from the plant and allow them to continue drying for another one to two weeks.

Supports

Included in the garden, other than vegetables, are the tomato “cages” which I constructed. If you attended our annual heirloom tomato plant sale, you saw a prototype of the cage. It is a simple structure fabricated out of 2x2 treated material. It measures three feet square and stands around sixteen inches in height when positioned in the garden. Chicken wire adorns the top of the structure, with a 12- to 16-inch diameter hole cut in the center. The idea behind the cage was to eliminate the need for staking. Tomato plants, as we all know, can be troublesome when staked, especially when the plants are loaded with fruit. When I introduced my idea during the class, there were a few snickers from those who were doubtful of its intent, and I must say I was a little skeptical also. Now that the growing season is behind us I am pleased to say that they worked wonderfully! The plants grew through the holes provided and draped over the sides, keeping the fruits off the ground, just as I had hoped. Coincidentally, not long after I placed the cages in the garden, Camilla Wilcox was reading a gardening book that dated back to the early 1920s. In this book she found a reference to cages such as mine, only they were used for peonies; however, the author noted they could be used for tomato plants as well.

I mentioned earlier that I had to change my way of thinking about gardening. What was once boring and monotonous to a ten-year-old is now challenging, interesting, and educational. Now I enjoy the aspect of introducing new varieties, displaying various growing methods, and sharing that knowledge with the public. ☺

If so inclined, one could trace at least part of the history of modern roses in the formal gardens of Reynolda. In the Nancy Beck Johnson Rose Gardens near the greenhouse, one could start with ‘Marie Van Houtte’ (1871) and study 23 varieties of pre-1917 tea, hybrid perpetual, hybrid tea, and rambler roses; then, in the All-America Rose Selections garden, add 94 varieties of later hybrid tea, climber, and miniature roses. There, one could even see into the future with the 2002 AARS winners currently code-named “yellow hybrid tea 98R208” and “white landscape rose 98R508.” These two gardens are an outstanding resource for rosarians and a marvelous destination for anyone who loves beautiful flowers.

Thomas Sears called the southern end of the formal garden, where the AARS garden is located, the Fruit, Cut Flower and Nicer Vegetable Garden. This space, about one and a half acres in size, featured decorative edible plants such as currants, figs, strawberries, rhubarb, gooseberries, and leeks. Fences within and surrounding it supported espalier fruit trees, decorative vines, and grapes. Arches connecting fences supported climbing roses. The basic form of the garden—a rectangle subdivided into plots edged with low-growing grass and joined by crushed gravel paths—has been retained since it was installed in 1921.

In 1972, the Winston-Salem Rose Society and the Gardens staff installed an AARS garden close to one-half acre in size within this space. Today this award-

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AMERICAN PILLAR

Nelson Casstevens by
Jane and Matt Rogers

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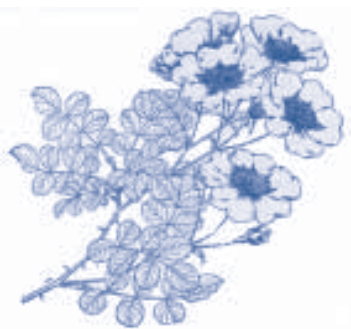
Vegetable Garden

Marge Asel
Dick Brenneman
Lynne Finney
Barbara Griffin
Pat Lackey
Eleanor Leverenz
Ann Morehead
Bev West



virginia r. weiler

'CAROLINE TESTOUT'



ROSA WICHURAIANA

winning garden, located at the southernmost end of this section of the formal garden, is packed full of AARS winners, a total of 800 plants. Although the earliest modern roses retained the delicate beauty and delicious fragrance of their wild forebears, most of these newer roses are far from these beginnings. Bloom colors are dramatic, and combinations are sometimes electric, as in the red and white of 'Fourth of July' (1999), the pink and yellow of 'Garden Party' (1959), and the intense coral of 'Impatient' (1984). Many of the flowers, like 'Brandy' (1981), are large, and a surprising number are scentless or nearly so.

In contrast with these sometimes-brash fellows, several very different rose plants are growing on old iron arches at the entrances to the AARS garden. They drape over, rather than climb, on the arches. Their multitude of thin canes appears to be tightly woven, reminiscent of the many bird nests they support in the spring. Their small, dainty flowers bloom only once a year, in the late spring, when the plants are covered with clusters and sprays of blooms that emit a faint tea scent. For many years, staff and visitors have been curious to know if they are original to the garden, and if so, what their names are.

The Research Process

The 1921 Plan

We are very fortunate to have the 1921 plan of this garden. Early photographs are helpful in showing the location of plantings and the overall design but are not helpful with plant identification. According to notes Thomas Sears wrote on the plan, Reynolda's horticulturist Rob Conrad had some leeway in selecting vegetables and small fruits for this section; however, Mr. Sears was very specific in his directions for all other plantings. He listed fourteen varieties of roses for this area, with each rose assigned to one or two arches. Only eight have remained on arches. Three did not bloom this year, so we did not attempt to identify them. Another rose, 'Sombreuil' (1850), was added in the early 1990s.

MORE of REYNOLDA for YOUR HOME

THE WICHURAIANA HYBRIDS :

“A CHARACTERISTICALLY AMERICAN ROSE”

The memorial roses, of which 'American Pillar', 'Hiawatha', 'Lady Gay', and 'Excelsa' are lovely examples, originated with a white-flowering Japanese species *Rosa wichuraiana*, which is a vigorous creeping rose. Hybridizers began to work with it in America during the early 1890s, and it soon proved reliable for creating a new type of rose. The 1909 edition of Doubleday, Page, and Company *Roses and How to Grow Them* described its arrival on the horticultural scene as giving rose production in America a new impetus, the first since work began in Charleston with Noisette roses around 1814. The author went on to state, "These varieties answer the requirements of the average American gardener better than many other plants... (they) fill a place in the garden and about the porch that no other plants have done so far." They also apparently fulfilled a special need or desire for roses to grow in cemeteries, where they were used as ground covers. Hence the name memorial rose. Canes rooted everywhere they touched soil, creating dense, floriferous mats.

In the 1917 formal garden plan, Thomas Sears specified roses of this type to be planted at the top of the wall on the east side of the

sunken garden so that they would cascade over it. Invoices confirm that these were received, and photographs indicate that they grew there for at least a few years. Young Japanese weeping cherry trees, planted just a few feet away, are also visible in these photographs. It is not known when these roses were removed, or if they simply died out as the cherry trees grew. They were also planted at the corners of the tea-houses.

The fifth of the old climbers at Reynolda, 'Dr. Van Fleet', is also the result of hybridization using *R. wichuraiana*, but the process that created it and the plant that resulted were different from the others. *R. wichuraiana* was first crossed with an old tea rose, then that seedling was crossed with a hybrid tea. The new plant was a vigorous climber with glossy foliage and large flowers. In 1930 a sport was found to repeat-flower. Named 'New Dawn', this rose is still very popular.

Roses with *R. wichuraiana* heritage are large, with thin canes up to twenty feet long, so they are somewhat difficult to find room for or to train to a small space. Like many other beautiful roses, they are prone to the usual problems like mildew and black spot. Even so, the *Wichuraiana* hybrids are still worthy of a place in the garden. A quick search on the Internet, starting with a site such as <http://www.findmyroses.com>, will yield multiple sources for the ones growing at Reynolda as well as others, with blooms of many shades and colors. ☺

Historical Resources

Period garden and scientific literature, rose history texts, and current references provided information on the characteristics of each rose. There was a great deal of information on some and very little on others. 'Dr. Van Fleet', for example, was widely used in the 1920s and is still available. Another rose, 'Poughkeepsie', has not been found in references, so even basic information such as bloom color is not available. By examining the plants to determine their likely ages and interviewing individuals who have long-term connections to the Gardens, we tried to determine if or when these plants might have been moved or added. As a result of these investigations, we believe that they are indeed old and have not been moved in recent memory.

Expert Evaluation

With this work completed, we asked for expert identification from the American Rose Society office in Shreveport, Louisiana. When the roses bloomed in May, Preston and I examined each plant and filled out a questionnaire provided by the ARS office. We provided a study name, such as "first arch west," a description of the leaf color, texture, number of petals, size of canes, fragrance, and even sketches of the prickles (commonly called thorns). Then I selected flower clusters and shipped them to Shreveport.

Aleene Sinclair, director of the ARS center, examined the blooms carefully and made identifications; however, in the letter accompanying her report, she commented that she could only make an educated guess without seeing them in person. With so many registered roses now in cultivation, even expert rosarians have difficulty with identification. By synthesizing information from various sources, however, we feel we have enough information to make a positive identification on some and a tentative identification on others. For the tentative ones, the names are enclosed with quotation marks instead of single marks, indicating that we are not completely sure that our identification is correct. Following is a synopsis of information we have on each of the roses. Comments begin with names as they appear on the new labels.



'HIAWATHA'

virginia r. weiler



'DR. W. VAN FLEET'

virginia r. weiler

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

ROSE NOTES:

IT PAYS to DOUBLE-CHECK

Reynolda Gardens is an educational garden. We share our horticultural successes and failures with the public so visitors can learn how plants grow in this area, what techniques are appropriate for our climate, and which plants are suitable for visitors' own gardens and landscapes. We make every effort to give correct information, so we were dismayed when we learned that we had been displaying an incorrectly named rose in the restored section of the garden. Even though we know that most home gardeners select roses for specific qualities that meet their needs and are not nearly so nit-picky about names as we are, we want to share our mistake so others can learn from it.

We obtained roses for the restoration from reputable companies, and these companies received their stock plants from sources they believed to be reputable. Even so, one rose slipped by everyone along the chain until last fall. The rose we believed to be 'William R. Smith' (1908) turned out to be 'Mrs. Dudley Cross' (1907), a very similar rose. Although the wrong rose is just as lovely as the right one, we will have to replace it because it is located in a restored garden that contains only those roses that grew there in 1918.

The reason for this mistake is rooted (pardon the pun) in the

revival of interest in old-fashioned roses in recent years. Amateur and professional horticulturists and historians have rescued many antique and early modern roses (with introduction dates from the early nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries) from old homesites, cemeteries, and similar places over the past couple of decades. The goal of these rescuers was to preserve these early roses before they were destroyed or forgotten. Gardeners took to them right away, and nurseries soon began to answer the demand. Many roses were not positively identified before nurseries began offering them. Most nurseries indicated this in their catalogs, and they have updated names and other information as it has become available.

If you are growing antique or early modern roses that you bought several years ago, you might want to double-check in the latest editions of the nursery catalogs to make sure you've got what you think you've got. If you really care about finding the correct name of any rose you have, you might want to contact the American Rose Society (318.938.5402 or ars@ars-hq.org) for help or consult some of the many books now available on this topic, including the recently released *Modern Roses XI*, published by Harcourt/Brace Academic Press for the American Rose Society. Unlike us, all you have to do then is to change the label, continue to enjoy the roses, and alert all the friends with whom you've shared cuttings to do the same. No big deal. Remember: a rose by any other name is—usually—just a rose by another name. 🌹

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Layout by David Fyten

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The Roses

'**Dr. W. Van Fleet**' (1910) was positively identified by Ms. Sinclair, and it appears on the 1921 plan. It is a vigorous climber with almost blue-green glossy foliage. Clusters of very light pink flowers, fading to white, emit a faint tea fragrance. Although it's growing on the wrong arch, the rose Mr. Sears selected for this location was the bright pink 'Caroline Testout', which this rose very clearly is not.

'**American Pillar**' (1902) was also positively identified. Its flowers and foliage are very similar to those of "Hiawatha," illustrating the importance of close examination of all aspects of a plant in making an identification. The single flowers are carmine with white centers, the foliage leathery and glossy. The two 'American Pillar' roses are on the correct arches, located at the southernmost end of the garden.

"**Hiawatha**" is a vigorous plant with rich green foliage. The named cultivar 'Hiawatha' (1904) was one of the most popular ramblers of its day. Its blooms are single, carmine with a white center. Ms. Sinclair tentatively identified the rose we sent her as 'Kew Rambler', which does not appear on the plan; however, the parentage of 'Kew Rambler' is *Rosa soulaianana* x 'Hiawatha'. The rose 'Hiawatha' appears on the plan in another location. The rose 'Poughkeepsie', about which I have found no information, was specified for the place occupied by "Hiawatha." Because of these two questions, there is still enough doubt to keep us from removing those two little marks. Probably, but not certainly, this is 'Hiawatha'.

"**Excelsa**" is distinguished by shapeless or irregular blooms of bright, light crimson, and rich green foliage. The named cultivar 'Excelsa' (1909), also known as 'Red Dorothy Perkins', was often recommended as the best climbing rose in the early 20th century. It often remains in old gardens long after other plants have died. Ms. Sinclair was almost positive that the plant she examined was 'Excelsa'. 'Excelsa' appears elsewhere on the 1921 plan, but 'Aviateur Bleriot', a pale yellow climber, was supposed to be on this arch.

"**Lady Gay**" presents a puzzle centering on its similarity to 'Dorothy Perkins'. This rose was identified as a possible 'Dorothy Perkins'. The named cultivar 'Lady Gay' (1905) is considered to be virtually identical to 'Dorothy Perkins'. The blooms are a combination of pinks, fading to white. Horticultural writers of the period considered 'Lady Gay' suitable for arches and for forcing for Easter. If this is indeed 'Lady Gay', it is on the correct arch. ☺



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