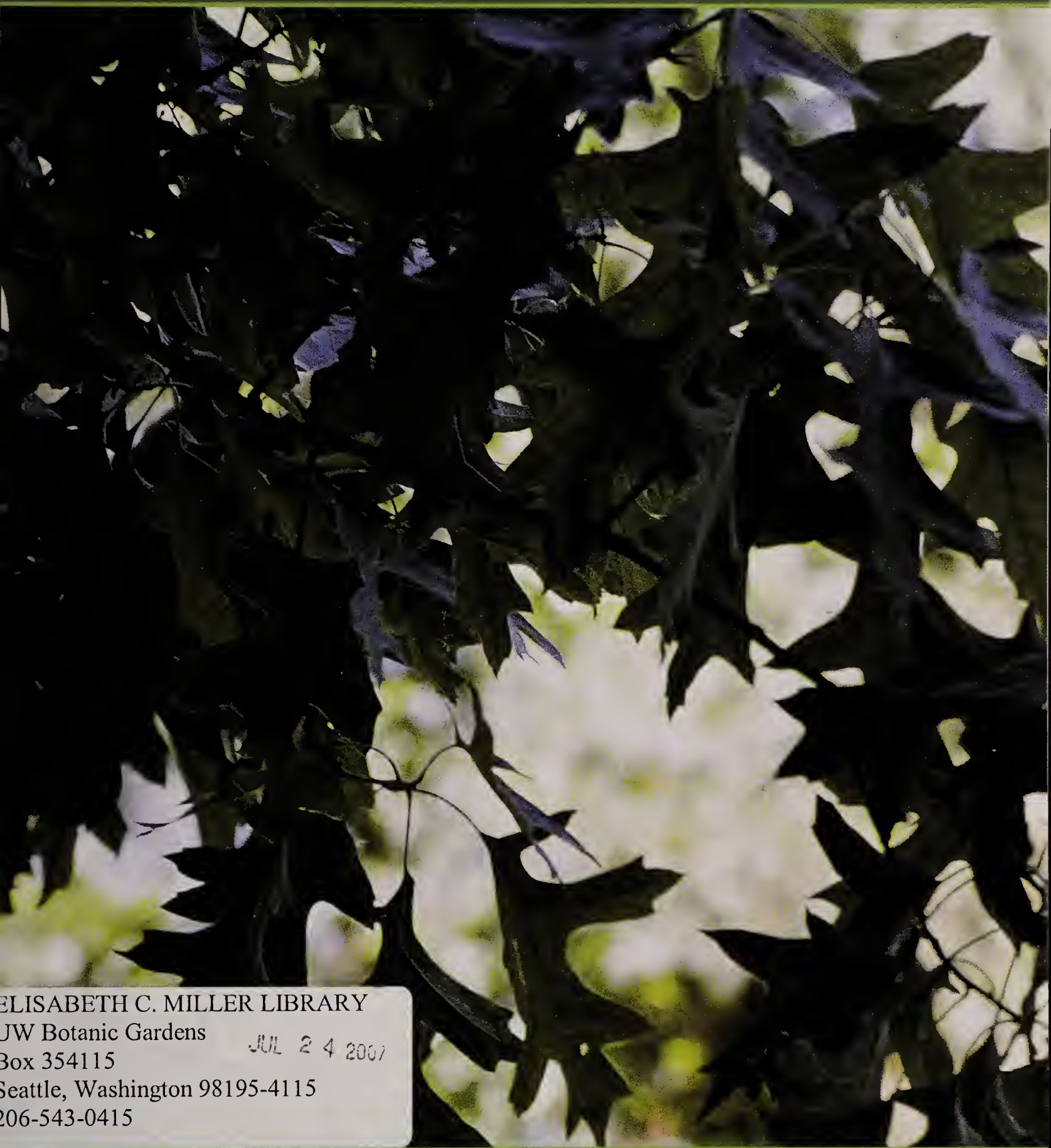


Washington Park Arboretum

BULLETIN



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JW Botanic Gardens

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JUL 24 2007

Published by the Arboretum Foundation

Summer 2007

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Summer 2007 Volume 69. Issue 2.

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ISSN 1046-8749.

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ABOVE: Beginning in August, the bright white fruit of *Sorbus forrestii*, native to China, look stunning against the tree's bluish gray-green foliage. The fruit remain on this attractive 15- to 25-foot tree deep into winter, providing long-lasting ornamental beauty. *Sorbus forrestii* can be seen in the Arboretum at grid locations 24-4E and 36-1E.

ON THE COVER: The scarlet oak, *Quercus coccinea*, is native through much of the eastern half of the United States, extending north into the southern portion of the Canadian province of Ontario. This medium to large deciduous tree is frequently used in park and street plantings, where it provides summer shade and is chiefly valued for the brilliant color of its autumn foliage. In the Arboretum, it can be found at grid locations 39-1W and 43-3E

Introduction

It has been my privilege to serve as the interim executive director of the Arboretum Foundation for the past few months. During that time the Foundation's Board of Directors conducted its search for a permanent replacement for Deborah Andrews, who served as executive director for over 10 years. I am pleased to say that the search has come to a successful conclusion, and I have gone off to wherever it is that retired interim people go.

Paige Miller has been appointed the Foundation's new executive director and has been on the job since April 23. She quickly learned a few basic lessons from me before my departure and is now energetically intent on meeting everyone and learning everything.

Paige brings more than 25 years of leadership experience to the Foundation. She was a Port Commissioner for 18 years, where she was a leader on several important development projects and complex initiatives. More recently, she led successful capital fundraising efforts for the Seattle Chinese Garden.

Paige is descended from "a long line of woodsmen and gardeners" and brings the right blend of leadership, passion and vision to carry out the Arboretum Foundation's part in the 20-year Master Plan for the restoration and improvement of Washington Park Arboretum and the enhancement of its education and recreation resources. She is especially excited about Pacific Connections, the Foundation's current fundraising campaign to build new Pacific Rim gardens, including collections from Australia, New Zealand, China, Chile and Cascadia, the native Pacific Northwest, as well as a botanic interpretation area.

Over the coming months there will be several opportunities to meet Paige in a variety of settings. But please feel free, any time, to drop by the Graham Visitors Center to introduce yourself and say hello.

My thanks to everyone for making my tenure at Paige's desk so much fun! ~

Neal F. Jessen

Interim Executive Director,
Arboretum Foundation



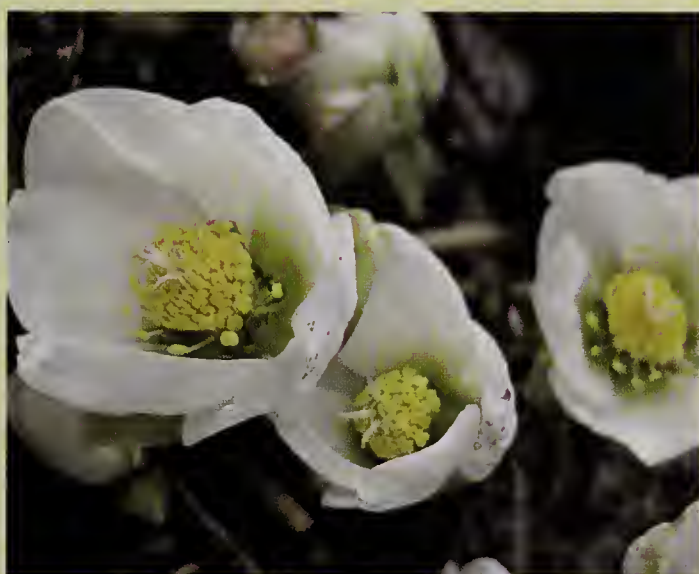
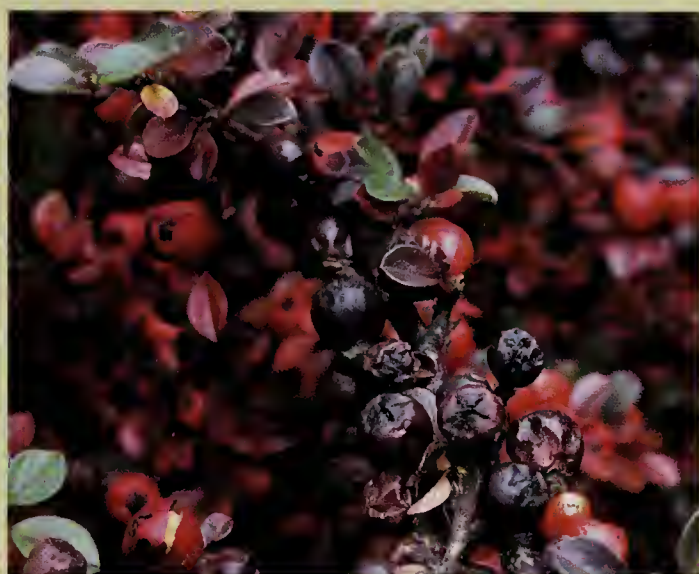
One of Briggs Nursery's newest introductions, *Daphne x transatlantica* 'Eternal Fragrance,' from noted plantsman Robin White, grows to be three feet wide and tall and combines extraordinary fragrance with repeat bloom; it is semi-evergreen in Zones 7 and 8 and deciduous in colder areas. For more about Briggs Nursery founder Bruce Briggs, see page 24. (Photo courtesy of Briggs Nursery.)

COMBINATIONS UNLOCKED

The Whys & Wherefores of Favorite Plant Combinations

12 Gardening for Year-Round Interest

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY SUZETTE BIRRELL



On most summer evenings you will find my husband Jim and me wandering our garden paths, glasses of wine in hand and usually accompanied by a friend or

family member. There is always much “ooing” and “ahhing” over the riotous blend of bloom and foliage and praise for great accomplishment. Jim and I just nod and smugly smile.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: *Clematis* and *Penstemon* blooms make rich complements for one another. The winter red berries of *Pyracantha* ‘Fiery Cascade’ garland branches that hosted *Clematis* ‘Star of India’ the previous summer. Bright white hellebore blossoms provide months of winter and spring interest. *Pyracantha angustifolia* ‘Gnome’ contributes vivid orange hues to autumn compositions.

We know that the credit goes not just to hard work but also to the true magic that happens in the garden and the many lessons it teaches us from season to season.

As Seattle natives, Jim and I have always been fans of the many local garden celebrities whose words have inspired us. With their exhortations ringing in our ears, we determined to take advantage of the exemplary Northwest climate and strive for 365 days of enjoyment along our garden paths. We wanted to mix, blend and partner plants and shrubs to have something in bloom, berry or colorful foliage all year long.

The Garden's Best Lesson

I started by hauling in more compost than my back cares to remember. A full-blown case of "plant lust" prompted attendance at many plant sales and visits to most Northwest nurseries. There was always a box of things to be planted sitting on the stoop.

Then came the awareness that achieving 365-days-of-garden-interest was not effortless. Plants did not always play happily together, and I could not always let competing foliage and flower just slug it out. Although I often had in mind inspiring images of plants that would look good together, much to my dismay, the outcome did not always match these images. Plants did not always grow and bloom on my schedule, and weather was certainly not predictable. But what often did happen were accidents of chance, resulting in garden partners that seemed to provide, unintentionally, the impact envisioned.

This was the garden's best lesson: Plants and shrubs that give the garden background and support through form and foliage are the garden's silent heroes. They are the ones that keep the garden delightful from spring until frost and sometimes longer. Although usually purchased for a particular growing season, they inevitably give so much more. They provide not just bloom but the right leaf color,

seedpod or structure that is needed to keep the garden going from one high point to another. They are, in fact, plants that actually achieve the 365-days-of-garden-interest goal that I initially wanted.

Shrubs and Clematis

This realization first dawned on me when I saw *Viburnum plicatum* 'Summer Snowflake,' with its lacy, white horizontal blossoms, provide structure for *Clematis* 'Polish Spirit.' The spring-flowering viburnum seemed to "bloom again" with rich, velvet-purple clematis flowers in the summer. I had originally planned for the clematis to wrap through the neighboring *Magnolia stellata* 'Royal Star.' But it seemed the garden knew better. This combination continued to "bloom" into late fall, featuring the autumn leaf color of the viburnum and the soft downy seed heads of the clematis. Then the cycle started again, when the soft buds of the star magnolia began to plump up at the start of winter.

I decided to try the vine-shrub act again with *Pyracantha* 'Fiery Cascade,' a sometimes-unruly shrub that grows just outside the front window. It is the perfect place for raindrops to hang and sparkle in fall, provides bright red berries for feasting birds in winter, and little pink flowers for the bees in spring. But when summer arrived, I was always tempted to chop the whole thing down; that part of the garden just seemed so dull. I then planted *Clematis* 'Star of India' to lace its way through the firethorn branches, so the shrub was loaded with rosy purple stars all summer long. By adding the scrumptious lemon yellow of the David Austin rose 'Graham Thomas' and the soft yellow tones of the rose 'Baby Love'—which seems never to stop blooming—this part of the garden also met the goal of being interesting all year. Eventually *Pyracantha angustifolia* 'Gnome' joined the picture, along with penstemons in shades of purple, such as 'Rich Ruby' and

'Blackbird.' A sprinkling of spring bulbs completed the scene.

A Combination for Shade

Transferring these lessons to the space under an old pink dogwood (*Cornus florida*), it was clear that hellebores and epimediums provided good interest from winter through spring. What I love about hellebores is that they keep their blooms on—looking like soft paper flowers—through early summer, and then their huge leaves look good until it is time for the next year's flowers to blossom. What more could anyone want from a plant? All this picture required for year-round interest were a few hostas and ferns for summer bloom and texture, variegated fuchsias for bright summer color and

various toad lilies, such as *Tricyrtis hirta*, *T. hirta* 'Miyazaki' and *T. formosana*, for the fall finale. With these long-lasting players, the shade garden is always interesting.

In each of these garden vignettes, each plant stars for part of the year, but it also helps show off other plants when it is not at its peak. Now Jim and I invite friends to come explore our garden paths in fall and winter months as well as spring and summer; there is always something to see and, for us, some new lesson to learn. ☺

SUZETTE BIRRELL has been an Arboretum Volunteer for over 10 years. This year she was co-chair of the Preview Gala for the Northwest Flower & Garden show

THANK YOU, LEE!

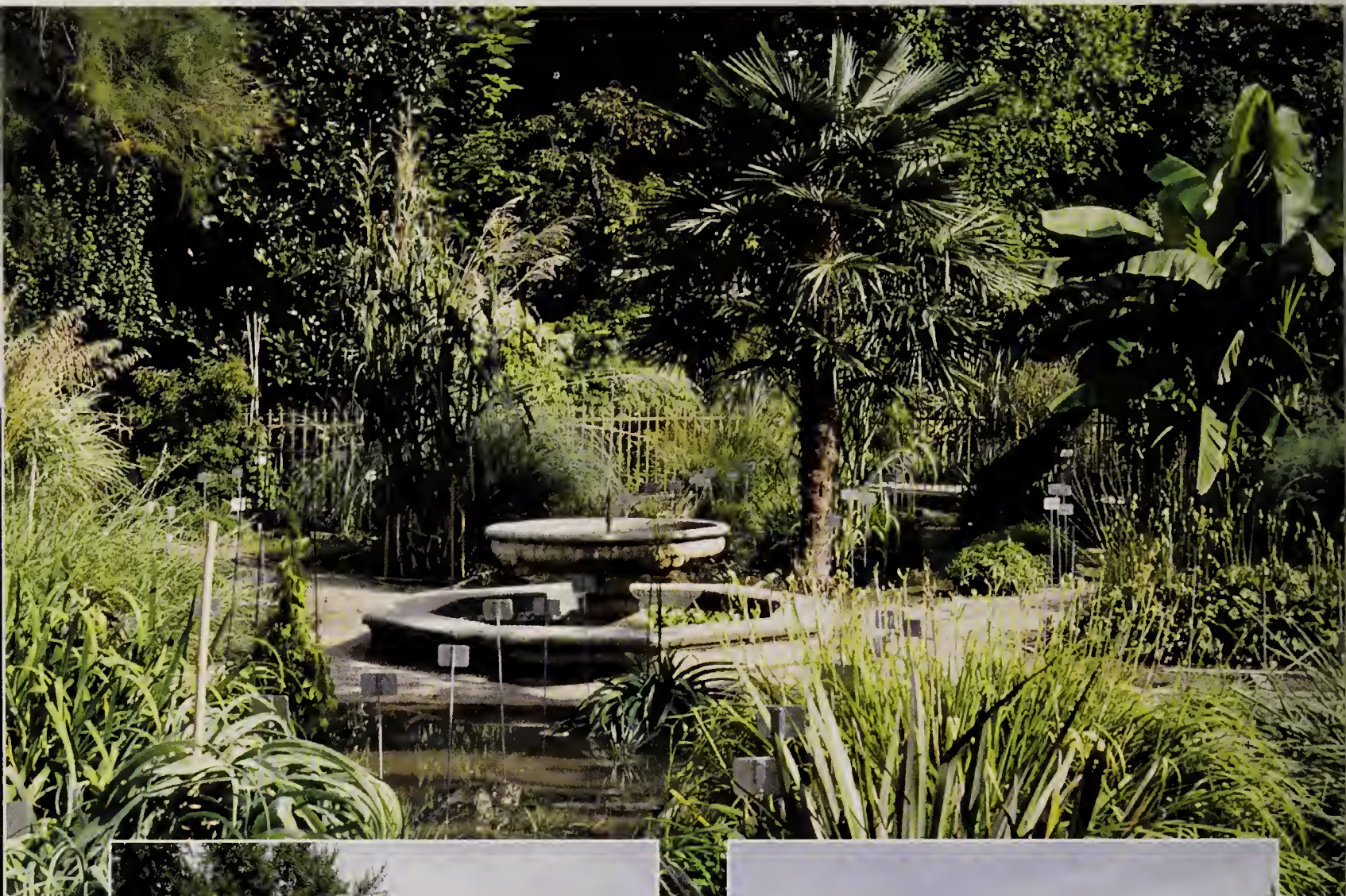
*The Arboretum Foundation and
Constance Bollen of cbgraphics wish to thank*

Lee Cuninggim Neff

for her extraordinary six-plus years as editor of the Bulletin.

*We shall all miss her wisdom and gentle humor,
AND her famous chocolate-pecan pie and rhubarb cobbler.
We all took advantage of any excuse to visit her amazing home & garden!
Lee is leaving us for other adventures, including a move to Kitsap where
another home and garden await her inspiring creativity.*





TOP: One of the central beds in the *orto rotundo*. **LOWER LEFT:** The greenhouse sheltering Goethe's palm tree inside the *orto rotundo*. **LOWER RIGHT:** The center of the *orto rotundo* looking toward *Il Santo*.

ORTO BOTANICO, PADUA

A RENAISSANCE JEWEL

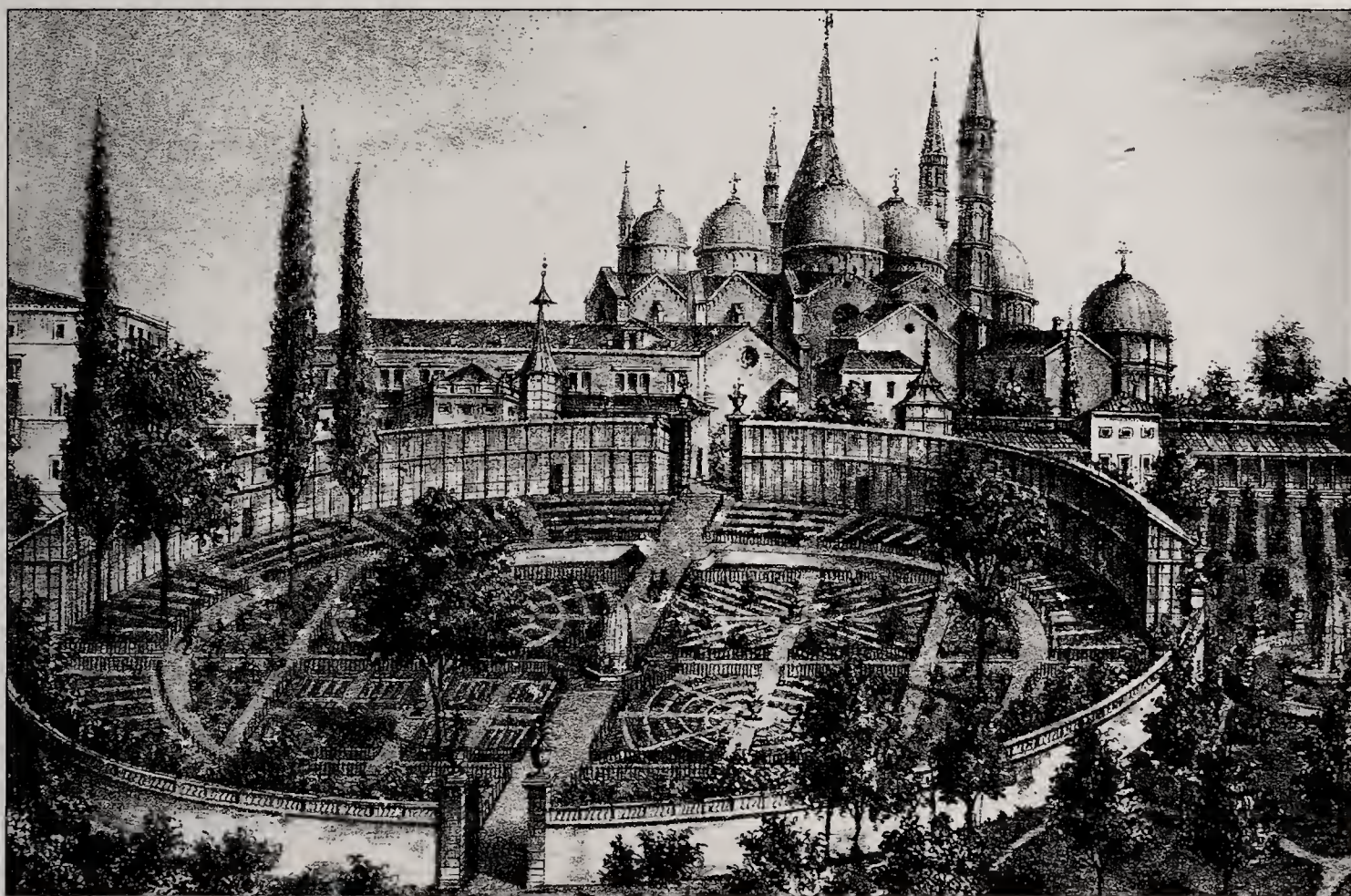
TEXT AND PHOTOS BY DAVID C. STREATFIELD

Padua is one of the finest cities in the Veneto, Venice's regional hinterland, and it is justly famous. Shakespeare set "The Taming of the Shrew" in its narrow, arcaded medieval streets. Devout pilgrims flock in large numbers to the shrine of St. Anthony of Padua—the second most popular saint in Italy—in *Il Santo*, the city's exotic Byzantine basilica. Botanists and horticulturists flock to the *Orto Botanico*, the botanic garden of the University of Padua, Italy's second oldest university, founded in 1222. *Orto Botanico* is the oldest surviving botanic garden in Europe. Beautifully maintained, it is

a transcendent jewel of Renaissance garden design, still fulfilling its original function as a teaching and research garden. The heart of the garden is a large, circular walled space with geometric beds, which has changed little since it was laid out in 1545.

Botany: Stemming from Medicine, Agriculture and Trade

Like all Renaissance gardens, *Orto Botanico* attempted to fully represent all nature. One consequence of this effort was the development of botany as a modern science, the origins of which are associated with 15th



View of the *Orto Botanico* in the early 19th century. (A. Tosini, "Panoramic View of the Orto Botanico, Padova," 1854.)

century medical research and the medieval practice of cultivating 'simples' or medicinal herbs. Some historians claim that it was the Italian acceptance of Epicurism, a doctrine that denied the immortality of the soul and implicitly supported humanistic thought, that led to the Middle Ages' ending 50 years earlier in Italy than elsewhere in Europe.

Botany was eventually advanced from the early years of the 14th century by practices such as human dissection in medical education at the University of Bologna. Advances in understanding anatomy and physiology in turn affected pharmacology. The identification of regional plants and close study of the work of a number of classical authors led to the realization that a wealth of plants existed outside the accepted medical stock. As Antonio Musa Bresavola stated, "Not a hundredth part of the herbs existing in the whole world was described by Dioscorides, Theophrastus or Pliny, but we add more every day and the art of medicine advances."

This study of the local flora was complimented by a veritable flood of new plants arriving from voyages of discovery around the world. In fewer than 100 years, more plants were introduced into Europe than in the prior 2,000 years. In the Veneto, the need to promote a more rigorously scientific study of plants was propelled both by a desire to improve medical education and the urgent necessity to possess a regularized accounting of agricultural products. By the 15th century the remarkable and highly democratic republic *La Serenissima* embraced the whole of the Veneto, including the formerly free cities of Padua, Vincenza and Verona, and commanded a highly successful trading empire with the East. This was so severely challenged by the appearance of the Ottoman Empire in 1453 that, to ensure a flourishing economy, waterlogged Veneto was completely transformed by an elaborate, new drainage system into a series of highly productive agricultural estates, whose products supported

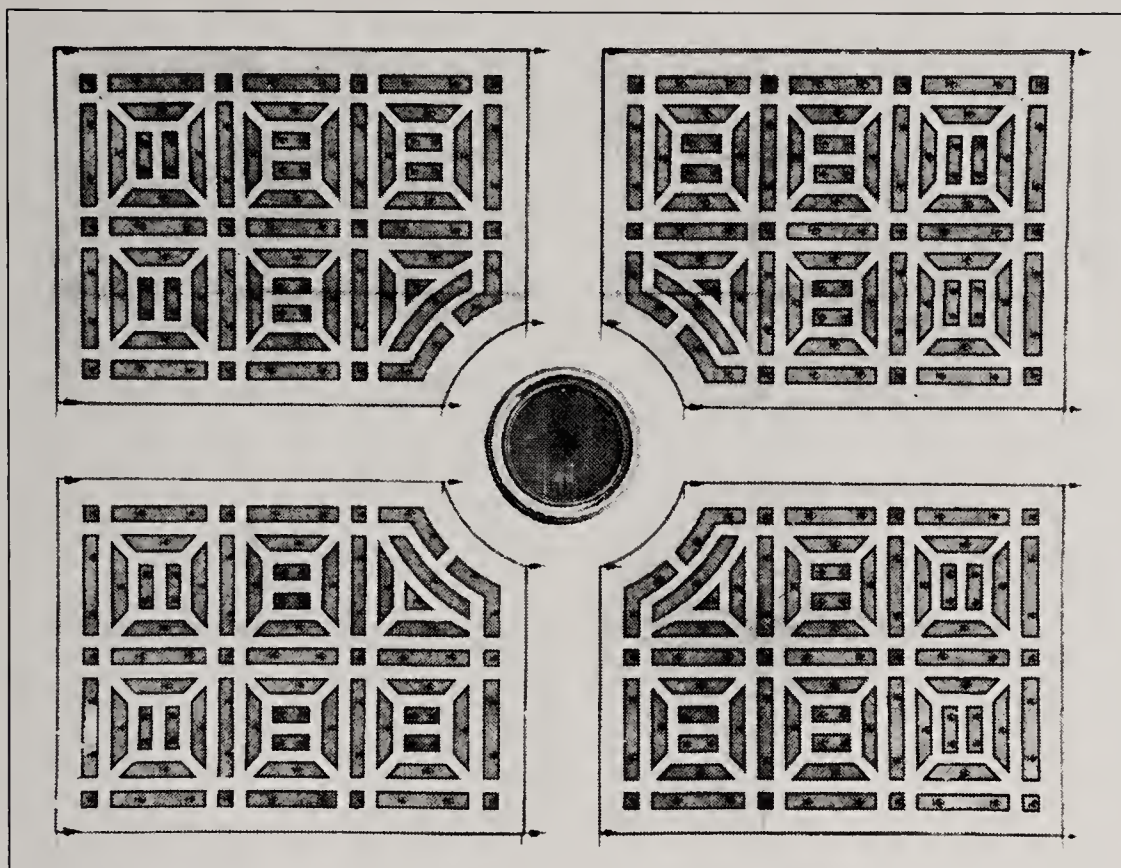
the republic's cities and provided goods that could be traded.

A New Chair of Botany Gets His Garden

Thus, the necessity of establishing a physical place for the rigorous study of plants for education and research served to advance medicine and pharmacology and agriculture. It was therefore appropriate that Francesco Bonafede, professor of medicine at the University of Padua, first proposed the establishment of a Chair of Botany. This request was granted in 1533, and the University invited him to become its first recipient. Bonafede soon realized that his goal of advancing medical practice and a strengthened botanical science could not be met without an adequate collection of plants, so he petitioned the senate of the republic to create a garden that could supply "simples" for a *spetiaria* or spice shop. The petition was finally granted in 1545, and the curator of the garden also became the professor of pharmacology. The document issued by the Senate describes Padua as "an ideal place for planting herbs, putting them into order and conserving them," emphasizes the universal benefit of such an institution for humanity and states that the garden should be planted according to the wishes of the university. Entry was to be granted to the learned, and the ultimate goal of this medicinal garden was public utility. Eight days after this decision, an irregular plot of land, lying beside a canal between *Il Santo* and *Santa Giustina*, and with a reliable water supply, was leased.

Daniele Barbaro's Design

The unusual and highly sophisticated design of the *Orto Botanico* resulted from La Serenissima's instruction to Monsignor Reverendissimo Eletto di Aquileja Daniele Barbaro to oversee the design. Barbaro was a highly cultured humanist who, with his younger brother, commissioned the architect Andrea Palladio to design a villa for their estate at Masér. Barbaro had also published



Detail of one of the main beds of the Orto Botanico, Padua. (G. Porro, “*L’orto de i simplici di Padova*,” 1591.)

an edition of the famous architectural treatise by Vitruvius. Had the design been entrusted to a doctor, it would have had a simple layout of rectangular beds like the physic gardens of medieval monasteries.

But Barbaro was steeped in the “New Learning,” which advocated the use of rediscovered classical design precedents. His highly ordered and architectonic design uses selected geometric forms in symbolic reference to Paradise or Eden. Renaissance humanism accepted the medieval belief that nature had been defiled by the expulsion from the Garden of Eden and was accordingly disordered. Since mathematics was regarded as the principal science, any attempt to recreate Eden had to use perfect shapes such as circles and squares; the circle represented heaven and the square, the earth.

Barbaro’s original design comprised the *horto rotondo*—the circular garden, also known as the *hortus sphaericus*—four annexes, a maze, and a hippodrome. The *horto rotondo* was a geometric garden, and the irregular outer garden was developed more naturalistically, following the precedent of large Roman villas.

Barbaro’s design also exemplified the concept of the garden as Art. Classical writers wrote of First Nature as nature unaltered by any human activity. Second Nature was nature altered by human settlements, aqueducts and agriculture. Third Nature, which appeared during the Renaissance, was nature altered as Art. This last concept was centered in the garden, which became a conceptual model or encyclopedia of nature. Leon Battista Alberti, the architectural theorist, declared these encyclopedic collections should be planted with “every known fruit that exists in any country.” By the sixteenth century this idea was expanded, so that gardens became true representations of all nature, containing living and dried plants, fossils, animals and minerals.

Initially, the *Orto Botanico* was a medicinal plant collection, but over time it evolved into the new conception of an encyclopedia. A separate structure housed a tank for irrigation water, and other rooms, according to Girolamo Porro’s booklet published in 1591, “will be used for keeping minerals, soils, stones and jewels. There will be a collection of fish, marine animals, sponges and corals; there will

Plan of the *Orto Botanico*, Padua.
(G. Porro, "*L'orto de i simplici di Padova*," 1591.



be land animals and stuffed birds. In other words a museum will be created."

The *Horto Rotundo*

The *horto rotundo* was the most impressive part of this ambitious enterprise. As a symbolic link between heaven and earth, it displayed nature as a form of theater. Encircled by a water-filled moat, an earthen berm with sloping inner and outer banks defined the large circular garden. This was divided into a square by paths oriented on the four points of the compass into four large quadrants symbolically representing the four continents: Europe, Africa, Asia and America, since Australia and Antarctica had not been discovered. The area between the circle and the large square was divided by paths into eight triangular beds. Beyond these beds, the outer curving sections were inclined, empha-

sizing the theatrical character of the garden.

The earliest surviving drawing of the garden dates from 1591 but shows a revised design installed in 1552, when the sloping berm was replaced by a brick wall with wrought iron gates—installed to address the problem of disappearing plants—at the entrance to each of the four major paths. This plan shows that each of the major quadrant sections was laid out with a different and highly fanciful design. One scholar has suggested that Barbaro's concern was not the practice of botany but the garden as an aesthetic experience. If this is the case, Padua's *Orto Botanico*, in serving both science and art, is an important exception among early botanic gardens. Each garden bed was identified by a letter, and each plant within each bed was numbered. Students learned their plants by studying lists of each bed and the numeric order within. Thus, the

garden functioned simultaneously as a visual theater of nature and a memory theater.

Seven Rules of Good Behavior Were Established Early On:

1. Do not knock on this gate before the day of Mark the Evangelist [i.e., the 25th of April] and not before the XXII hour [i.e., 10:00 a.m.].
2. Anyone entering through the main gate should not wander from the main avenue.
3. Do not break stems, pick flowers, collect fruit or seeds, or pull up roots in the garden.
4. Do not touch young shoots, and do not stand or leap over flower beds.
5. The gardens are to be respected.
6. Nothing must be done against the will of the prefect.
7. Any contravention of these rules will be punished with fines, imprisonment, or exile [from the Venetian Republic].

The oldest recorded plant was a *Vitex agnus-castus*, which was planted in 1559 and died in 1984. Lilacs were introduced in 1565; sunflowers, in 1568; and potatoes, in 1590—each the first to be planted in Italy. Most of the plants seem to have originated in the Apennines; some were imported from the Balkan Peninsula, and some from the Levant and the new world. Early introductions were *Rheum x cultorum* from Bulgaria, and *Cyclamen creticum* and *Campanula saxatilis* from the southern Aegean area. The famous *Chamaerops humilis* palm was planted in 1585 and is now the oldest plant in the garden.

A major remodeling occurred between 1697 and about 1710. The wall was raised and capped with a balustrade, and the axial entrances were framed by tall masonry gate piers topped with acroters—ornamental urns featuring wrought-iron representations of fruiting *Ananas* (pineapple), flowering *Fritillaria*, *Lilium* and *Yucca*—with small fountains at their base. Busts of important botanists were placed in prominent positions on the wall. Inside the wall new ornamental

pools and fountains were introduced, and the layout of the beds was simplified. The *horto rotondo's* layout was now essentially complete. The area outside was developed as a small landscape park and contains some notable large trees. New conservatories were added between 1807 and 1818.

A World Heritage Site

The garden quickly became famous, attracting visitors from other countries. On 27 September, 1786, Goethe visited the garden and wrote in his autobiography, “It is a pleasure and instructive to walk through a vegetation that is strange to us.” In his quest for the “original plant,” he was particularly interested in the palm, which contributed to his ideas on evolution. Today, the tree, called “Goethe’s Palm,” is protected within a tall greenhouse.

A visit to this teaching and research garden is an enchanting experience. Within the encircling brick wall is a serene place where one can still enjoy a varied presentation of a “theater of nature,” including the silhouette of *Il Santo's* extraordinary and exotic Byzantine domes and the sound of its bells calling the faithful to mass and marking the hours of the day.

Maintenance standards are exemplary. On the day after a prodigious rainstorm that literally created waves on *Il Santo's* piazza, I was astonished to find no signs of any damage. The *Orto Botanico* at Padua is the only Renaissance garden in Italy that still retains any semblance of the concept of the garden as an encyclopedia of nature. It is also the only early botanic garden whose design was a deliberate work of art. This makes its survival even more precious, and it is appropriate that in 1997 the garden was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. ☺

DAVID STREATFIELD is Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Washington and a member of the Bulletin's editorial board.



The Journey to a Snowgum Woodland in Seattle

BY SIERRA SMITH AND DAVID MABBERLEY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SIERRA SMITH

In remote parts of the Australian Alps there exists a singularly beautiful tree known as the snowgum (*Eucalyptus pauciflora* subsp. *niphophila*). The multiple trunks of this timberline tree shed bark in strips revealing a smooth undersurface of bright yellow and red. As the tree matures, this undersurface turns stark white,

and the remnant bark fades to a pale gray, giving the tree both its ghostly character and its common name. Hailing from Victoria and New South Wales, snowgums form the foundation of a unique and varied sub-alpine forest



ABOVE: The white undersurface of the bark of mature *Eucalyptus pauciflora* subsp. *niphophila* gives the snowgum *Eucalyptus* its common name. **RIGHT:** On this map of Australia, the region of the Australian Alps is shown in red.

Map courtesy of Dept. of State and Regional Development, Victoria



community and will be the crux of the new Australia exhibit in the Pacific Connections Garden at Washington Park Arboretum.

Choosing a Forest Type

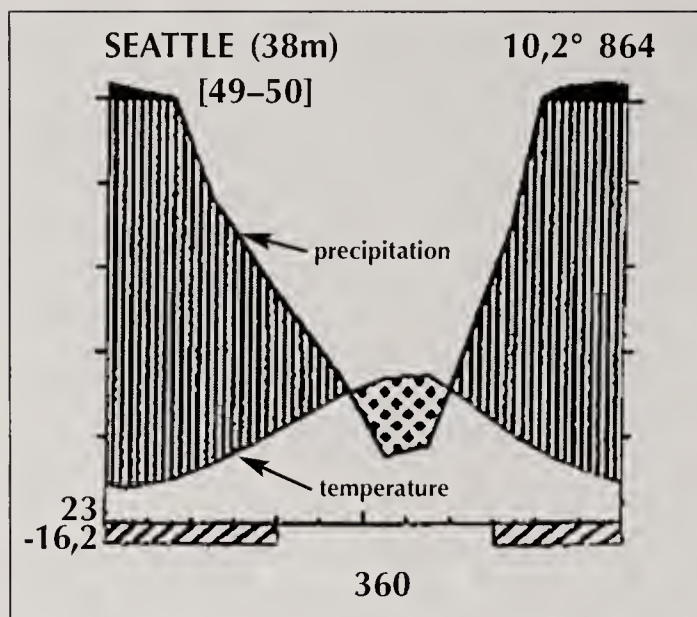
The image of swirling mists silhouetting these majestic apparitions and transporting visitors to a lush and mysterious Australian forest captured the imagination of the members of the University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG) Curation Committee, when they chose to recreate a snowgum woodland. However, this decision was far more than simply an aesthetic one. In keeping with the Pacific Connections' theme of bringing together forest communities growing in similar climates around the Pacific Rim, they began their hunt

for a representative Australian forest by examining and comparing the so-called Walter Diagrams of Washington state and eastern Australia. In 1967 Heinrich Walter and Helmut Lieth published a world atlas of climate diagrams that are graphical representations of the seasonal climatic flux at given locations. These diagrams readily provide comparisons of temperature and precipitation between geographically distinct areas.

The challenge was to find an Australian forest community that would tolerate the combination of wet and cold that Seattle winters offer. Despite Australia's size and diversity of habitats, very few areas closely match the climate of the Pacific Northwest, so the search for an appropriate forest type was readily

ABOVE: The decision to create a snowgum woodland in the Australia portion of the Arboretum's newly planned Pacific Connections Garden was both aesthetic and practical. Research revealed that the mountains of Victoria, Australia—home to the graceful snowgum—were similar in climate to the Pacific Northwest.

WALTER DIAGRAM



refined: Walter Diagrams reveal that the mountains of Victoria share in common the cool, damp disposition of the Pacific Northwest. Additionally, higher elevation plant communities in these mountains withstand regular freezing weather and high precipitation.

A number of forest communities exist in the identified area of the Australian Alps, but the striking appearance of the snowgum and its virtual absence from the gardens of the Pacific Northwest make it an attractive choice. Not only will a grove of these trees be a unique feature of the Arboretum, but the diverse, associated plant communities will provide depth and fullness to the focal forest planting.

The Snowgum Community

The snowgum grows up to the tree line at 6500 feet. At the highest elevation, the trees are short (15 to 20 feet), multi-trunked and widely spaced. Often, high winds shape them into open, twisted forms with extremely wide, asymmetrical trunks. Underneath and between the trees is a continuous blanket of herbaceous plants. The impression is of a mountain meadow of grasses and flowers dotted with ghostly, sprawling snowgums, much like an alpine version of American oak savannas. A patchy shrub layer provides additional structure and includes such gems as the white-flowered *Grevillea australis* (Proteaceae) and *Oxylobium ellipticum* (Leguminosae), with its bright yellow heads of banner and keel flowers.

Lower down the mountain, snowgum trees grow taller (to 35 feet) and denser and are found with other Eucalyptus species such as *E. delegatensis*, *E. dalrympleana* and *E. pauciflora* subsp. *pauciflora*. In this area, the native understory is composed of a myriad of flowering shrubs over a carpet of low grasses. Most of these lower-altitude forests have been cleared and burned for cattle grazing. About 1960 the burning stopped, and the forests began to regenerate. Now, snowgum forests are protected in national parks, and as much as 80 percent of the historic snowgum forest has regrown.

Snowgums are associated with moist areas and seeps. Interspersed throughout these forests are rich sphagnum bogs that offer floriferous assemblages with interesting species such as *Lycopodium fastigiatum*, a clubmoss, and *Drosera arcturi*, a carnivorous sundew. The bogs are characterized by a dynamic landscape of mossy hummocks and wet hollows. The mounding growth of the sphagnum provides the substrate for sedges and restios. As a hummock grows, its apex begins to dry out and dies, allowing dwarf shrubs and other mosses to become established. Considered "significant wetlands" by Australian National Parks, the bogs host rare plants and serve as important breeding pools for amphibians.

Interpretation

The guiding principle in the design of the Pacific Connections Garden is the idea of the "immersive experience." The goal is to give the visitor the feeling of standing in one of these native forests, so that one need not travel halfway around the world to gain an appreciation of one of these communities. In creating an immersive snowgum woodland experience at the Washington Park Arboretum, the goal is to recreate, as far as possible, a high-elevation hike through the Australian Alps. However, the site offers certain challenges that require careful consideration: A natural seep keeps a portion of the area soggy for much of the year; an open area near the parking lot is

necessary for unloading buses; existing dense plantings along the northern edge of the site need to be retained. Working within these constraints, an Australian loop trail has been designed. It will take visitors along the edge of a blooming, verdant bog, around a grassy, sub-alpine clearing, and through a dense, enchanting snowgum forest.

Having identified the focal tree species for the Australia Garden—the snowgum—and three associated plant communities—treeline open woodlands, closed shrubby woodlands and bogs—the next task was to develop meaningful plant lists and decide how to best utilize the garden’s limited space. Australian National Parks documents, floristic surveys, scientific research papers and pollen analyses from bog sediments were all used to develop an idea of the diversity and abundance of plant species present in these plant communities. Specialists in Australia were consulted. Photographs were utilized to visualize how these plants might assemble in their native environments. Additionally, plants with horticultural promise were emphasized.

While the thrust of this garden will be the “immersive forest experience,” it is recognized that many visitors come to Washington Park Arboretum for new garden ideas and to increase their palette of garden plants. For this reason, the plan includes both an entry garden that will highlight some of the showiest members of the snowgum community and an aesthetically designed planting at the edge fronting Arboretum Drive. This visually accessible planting will mass the colorful blooms and interesting textures of plants from other habitats in southeast Australia.

Horticultural Offerings

Acquisition of this plant material will be far from easy. The majority of plants identified are not available in the trade or, if they are, provenance is unknown. From a conservation standpoint, the more information that is known about where and when a plant was collected,

the more valuable that plant and its offspring will be. In order for this garden to be fully realized, it will therefore be necessary for the UWBG to make a collecting expedition to the Australian Alps.

While this effort and expense may seem to be a drawback, it actually provides the exciting opportunity to introduce a rich array of hardy herbaceous plants and shrubs to Seattle gardens. Many of the shrubs of lower elevation snowgum forests have remarkable floral displays. Three shrubby members of the Leguminosae, the pea family—*Bossiaea foliosa*, *Pultenaea juniperina* and *Platylobium formosum*—will brighten the Arboretum’s snowgum forest and, if proven garden-worthy, may be available to the Seattle public in the future. Other exciting species are members of more familiar genera, including *Viola betonicifolia* subsp. *betonicifolia*, *Lobelia gibbosa* and *Clematis aristata*. While it is impossible to predict exactly which of the dozens of species being considered for this garden will capture the fancy of local gardeners, the diversity of plants and climatic tolerance of the snowgum woodlands offer high hopes for the horticultural contributions this garden will make to the gardens of the Pacific Northwest. ∞

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DIG

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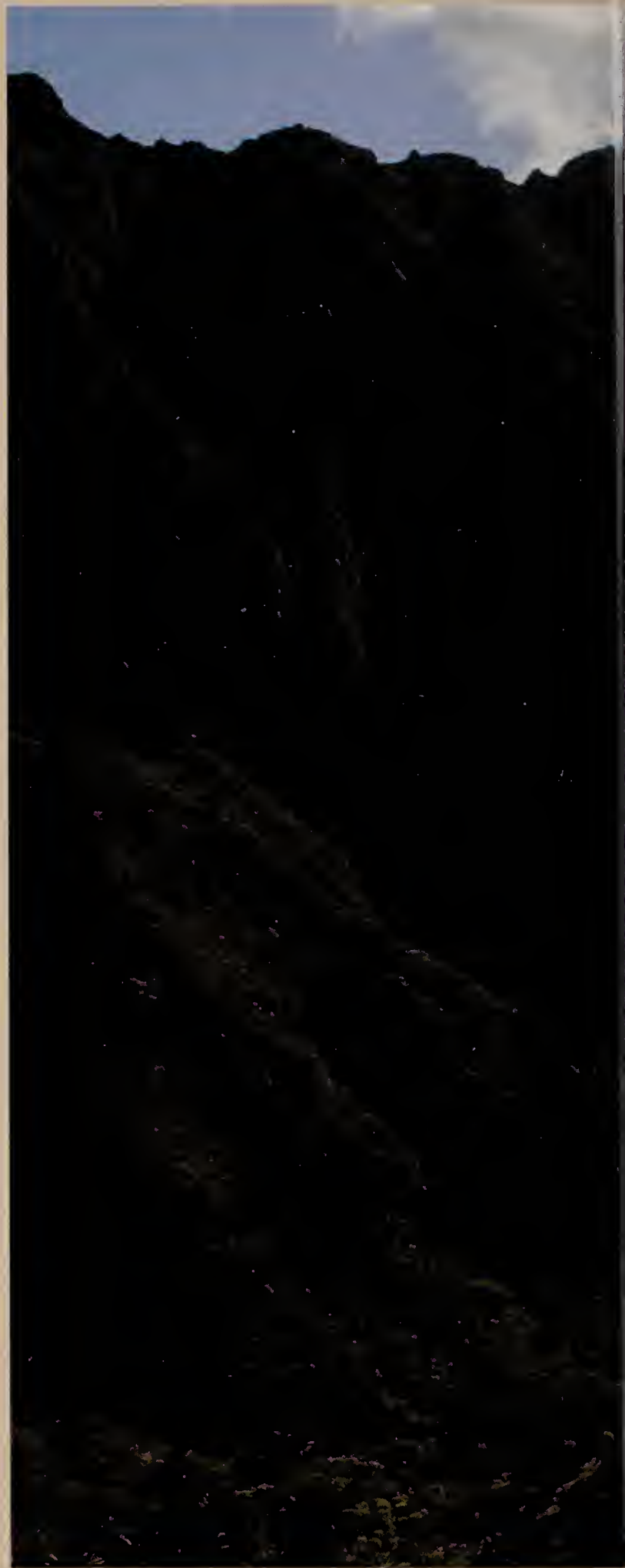
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Those fortunate enough to effect an occasional escape from the doom and gloom of a Seattle winter take sweet solace in the relative proximity of the warm and welcoming isles of Hawaii. After enduring a mere six hours crammed with a couple hundred other fugitives in a flying sardine can, one staggers out of the plane's stale air into the balmy, plumeria-scented skies of Maui or Kauai or the Big Island. What is one to do, then, if, after several such ventures, beach bumming begins to bore—Hana is ho-hum, Lihue loses all allure and Kona can captivate no more?

Greater Botanical Beneficence

Although it takes considerably greater effort to get from here to there, an attractive alterna-



TOP: Jutting into the Atlantic on the northwest coast of Tenerife, the town of Garachico is still recovering from a 1706 volcanic eruption that buried half the town—once the most important port on the island—in lava. **BELOW:** Naturalized pelargoniums adorn a wayside shrine on a volcanic slope high above the southwestern shore of the island of La Palma.

A GARDENER'S HOLIDAY

The Canary Islands

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY DANIEL SPARLER

Perched at the edge of a ravine that meanders 2000 feet down to the sea near the western tip of Tenerife, the tiny village of Masca, once a pirates' lair, was accessible only by mule until a breathtakingly precipitous, narrow road was constructed a few decades ago.



tive lies just off the northwest coast of Africa in Spain's Canary Islands, a sort of parallel universe to Hawaii and analogous to our 50th state in a host of ways, including their spectacular geological birth, their history of human settlement and current political status, as well as their superbly appealing and equitable weather patterns—all of which have contributed to the development of a post-1950 economy based in large part on tourism. However, their numerous similarities only serve to draw attention to the dramatic differences in the two sets of islands, and for hort-heads, such as this writer, the greater botanical beneficence offered by the Canaries is in itself sufficient fuel for several visits.

Geologically, both archipelagoes are of relatively recent volcanic origin: the islands are isolated mountaintops that rise directly from the ocean floor. In the case of the Canaries, the youngest island, El Hierro, is less than one million years of age, while the oldest, Lanzarote, comes in at only 20 million years old. In spite of the Canaries' proximity to Africa—the easternmost islands of Lanzarote and Fuerteventura thrust out of the North Atlantic just 60 miles off the southern border of Morocco—they share no geographic relationship with the continent. The snow-capped summit of El Teide (12,200 feet) on the island of Tenerife serves not only as the highest point in Spanish territory but also takes fame as the third-tallest volcano in the world (measured from the ocean floor), behind only Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea in Hawaii.

Historically and politically, both sets of islands were unwillingly brought into the orbit of a great Western power—in the case of the Canaries through ruthless military conquest by Spain just as Columbus was gearing up for his first misguided expedition across the Atlantic. Both were subsequently annexed and, in these more enlightened times, now share virtually the same political status. The Canaries form an "autonomous community" of two provinces within Spain—essentially identical to Hawaii's



statehood within the United States. Like Hawaii, the Canaries are composed of seven inhabited islands, but their population (at 1.7 million) is much greater; and historical rivalry between the Canaries' two most populous islands, Gran Canaria and Tenerife, has created two competing metropolises (Las Palmas and Santa Cruz, respectively), as opposed to the solitary status enjoyed by Honolulu.

Exports and Imports Tragedy and Triumph

Economically, both destinations were long dominated by the export of similar agricultural products (including sugar, subtropical and tropical fruits), until the startling explosion of tourism in the last half-century helped

ABOVE: In the surprisingly verdant Guayadeque Canyon on the east side of Gran Canaria thrive several stands of *Echium decaisnei*, a dense, compact shrub that blooms virtually year-round with handsome cones of white and lavender blue.



engender a dramatic shift in economic focus. The Canaries' relative proximity to Europe (only 700 miles from the nearest point on the Spanish mainland), and that continent's considerably larger population pool, initially made them a big draw for mass-market middle-class tourism, as opposed to Hawaii's early and erstwhile elitist and somewhat exclusive mystique. Five islands in the Canaries offer nonstop flights to a host of western and northern European cities, and this ease of travel, combined with the European Union's open borders for citizens of member states, has drawn in the snowbirds by the scores of thousands: In several spots German or English is heard more often than Spanish. Even though a large majority of tourists arrive on package tours, there are many options for independent

travelers. Most enticing is an organized system of holiday rentals of restored and modernized rural homes, many boasting sweeping views from shore to summit, some of which are set amidst working orchards. (For an online glimpse of the possibilities, go to www.ecoturismocanarias.com, the website of the Canarian Association for Rural Tourism.)

Culturally the Canarian experience is a mixture of tragedy and triumph. Unlike the indigenous peoples of Hawaii, the Canaries' earliest peoples, known as Guanches, saw their language and culture disappear, and those who did not succumb to disease or the sword were gradually assimilated into Spanish settler stock. The victorious Spanish, flush with plundered wealth from their New World acquisitions as well as from export of Canarian commodities,

ABOVE: Perched at the edge of cataclysm, a one hundred-year-old *Euphorbia mellifera* clings to life 2,000 feet above the outlet of the Barranco de las Angustias (Canyon of Fear), one of the world's most extreme examples of erosion, from which the Caldera de Taburiente opens to the Atlantic Ocean on the western coast of La Palma.

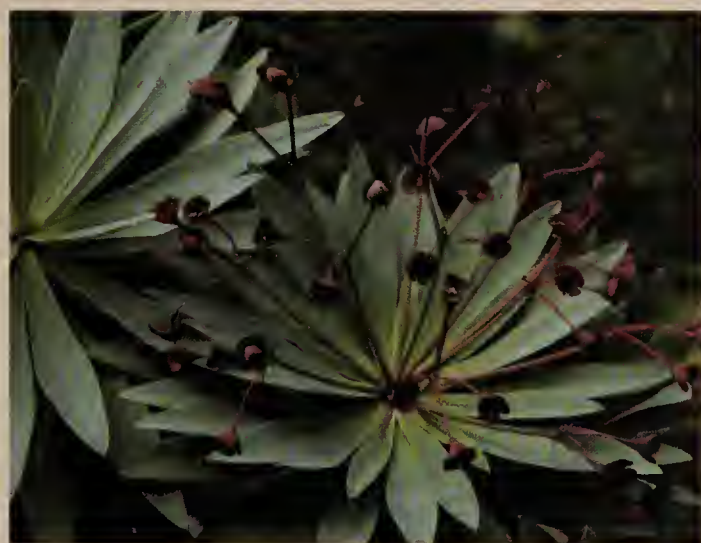


quickly erected impressive late Renaissance and Baroque structures and laced their new settlements with opulent palaces, churches and public buildings. Many of these survive intact in several strikingly pretty towns and small cities across the islands, and their compact cores, combined with strict land-use planning, make them ideal for exploring on foot. The islands' two large cities also offer considerable pedestrian appeal, with spacious, well-landscaped parks and some impressive contemporary structures, such as Santa Cruz de Tenerife's stunning opera house designed by Santiago Calatrava. These successes mostly mitigate the scars on the land exacted by a number of gargantuan and ill-conceived tourist resorts, which have been largely confined to a few locations in the most arid coastal spots around the islands.

A Hothouse of Botanic Diversity

However charming or inspiring the product of the human hand may be, the forces of nature are the big pull for all categories of tourists in the Canaries. Without doubt, the multitudes have been drawn by the gentle warmth of the so-called "land of eternal spring." Even the ancients recognized this quality: The Canaries were known as the "Blessed Isles" to the Greeks and the "Fortunate Islands" to the Romans. Thanks to the cool Canaries Current that sweeps around it, the archipelago enjoys delightfully even-tempered weather in spite of being within spitting distance of the Sahara. Gran Canaria, for example, has an average daily high of 69 degrees Fahrenheit in winter and 79 F in summer, although an east wind in August can send temperatures soaring into

ABOVE: *Canarina canariensis*, the Canary bellflower, shows off in the moist woodlands of Los Tilos, a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve near the northeastern coast of La Palma, the most verdant corner of the Canaries archipelago.



the 90s. While many coastal areas bask in seemingly perpetual sunshine, the rugged topography yields vast differences in climate as one ascends in altitude—a key factor, along with hydrology and highly varied soil composition, which makes the Canaries a veritable hothouse of botanic diversity.

As part of the botanical region known as Macaronesia (of Greek origin, *makaros* = happy; *nesia* = islands), which also includes nearby Madeira, the Azores and Cape Verde, the Canaries are one of the world's great centers of biodiversity and boast an astonishingly large number of endemic taxa. The islands cover only one percent of Spanish territory but account for more than 50 percent

of the country's endemic species. While the British Isles (more than 40 times the size of the Canaries) sport only 16 endemic plants, the tiny Canaries archipelago (2800 square miles, as opposed to Hawaii's 6400) offers more than 500 endemic plants. The island of Tenerife alone boasts about 1370 plant species, more than half of which are endemic to Macaronesia.

A short road trip, or even a long hike on the islands of La Palma, Tenerife or Gran Canaria, reveals spectacular differences in flora: Island ecosystems include desert, subdesert, subtropical woodland, cloud forest and alpine zones, often located within a couple of miles of one another. Basic botanical building blocks

LEFT: Soaring 500 feet above the crater floor, the Roque Cinchado looms in front of the 12,200-foot peak of El Teide volcano—the highest point on Spanish soil—on the island of Tenerife. **TOP RIGHT:** (Photo by Jeffrey Schouten) The author poses with a robust specimen of *Sonchus palmensis* in the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve of Los Tilos on La Palma, the “Isla Bonita.” **LOWER RIGHT:** The highly ornamental shrub, *Euphorbia atropurpurea*, thrives in the medium-altitude zones of the southern portions of Tenerife.

have been bequeathed by two mothers—one, African, the other Mediterranean. Scores of botanical relics are preserved here that, due to climate changes from the Ice Age and subsequent drying in both areas, have disappeared from corresponding continental regions. Many plants that had much wider distribution in past millennia are now found only on the Canaries. The second factor explaining the extremely large number of endemics is evolution: speciation due to adaptive radiation brought on by vast differences in topography, moisture and soil type within a small geographic area. Extreme topography is the norm on most islands; here, verticality is given equal time with horizontality—in the form of sheer cliffs thousands of feet high and breathtakingly deep ravines. In fact, the westernmost island, La Palma, is said to display the world's greatest variations in altitude relative to its size—only 280 square miles, about one-eighth the size of King County.

Plants to Ogle

It is not possible to catalog here the myriad, mouthwateringly marvelous plants to behold in the Canaries, but here are a dozen of the most delectable ogled by the author on a trip this past February:

Aeonium spp. (Crassulaceae): Of the 30 or so species in this genus, most of the showy ones we grow originate in the Canaries. It was a treat, but no surprise, to see the miniature versions massed in arid areas of lava rock, but what a shock to see huge stands of *A. arboreum* at the edge of moist woodlands next to flowering almonds!

Arbutus canariensis (Ericaceae): A sibling of our madrona, the Canary version is much more elegant and healthy (Is it the pollution-free air?), with smaller leaves, large and edible fruit, and a glossy trunk.

Canarina canariensis (Campanulaceae): Simply stated, one of the prettiest flowering vines, sporting two-inch, orange-red bells with red veins, glossy foliage and edible fruit. Grows in moist woodland.

Dracaena draco (Asparagaceae): An archetypical symbol of the Canaries, holding great cultural and spiritual significance, the dragon tree—which can live hundreds of years and have a spread of 30 feet or more—not only resembles its namesake but has blood-red sap to boot.

Echium spp. (Boraginaceae): In addition to the red spires of the biennial *E. wildpretii* that sparkle up the slopes of the Teide volcano, it was a joy to discover the perennial, shrubby *E. decaisnei* on Gran Canaria. The latter blooms virtually year-round, with graceful candelabras of white and lavender-blue.

Erica arborea (Ericaceae): Don't even begin to think you've seen a tree heather until you run up against a grove of 50-foot, 100-year-old specimens with trunks 18 inches in diameter.

Euphorbia spp. (Euphorbiaceae): Too many to name, but in addition to the now well-known *E. mellifera*, big standouts include the massive, succulent candelabra form *E. canariensis* and the stunningly showy-red inflorescence of *E. atropurpurea*.

Greenovia spp. (Crassulaceae): Looking for all the world like a cross between a dwarf aeonium and an echeveria (and now included in the genus *Aeonium*), some species of these prostrate succulents grow in north-facing sheer rock cliffs with a nearly constant supply of moisture trickling over them.

Pericallis webbii (Compositae): Endemic to Gran Canaria, this large herbaceous perennial, closely allied to florists' cineraria, sports masses of pale lilac daisies with deep purple centers.

Phoenix canariensis (Palmae): This massive palm, one of the showiest in the family, bears edible, date-like fruit and is reportedly able to withstand hard frosts! One of the most enduring images of the islands.

Pinus canariensis (Pinaceae): Dozens of square miles of these regal pines rise above the cloud forests on several islands. The heartwood of ancient specimens was used to make beautiful cabinets and coffered ceilings.

Sonchus spp. (Compositae): Imagine Doctor Seuss creating an aristocratic, vastly oversized dandelion, and you've got the idea. The daintiest species grow to three feet, but a couple of gangly, woody versions can reach 10 feet.

The plant-watching is rewarding in innumerable spots throughout the islands, and civic plantings include a fetching complement of natives as well as exotics. One of the best (and, to this writer's eye, the prettiest, best-maintained public garden in Spain, not to mention one of the oldest) is the Jardín de Aclimatación de La Orotava in Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife. Popularly known simply as the Jardín Botánico, this gorgeous garden was established in 1788 at the order of King Carlos III for the purpose of testing subtropical plants from around the world for their suitability for use in the Canaries.

Name Game for Travelers

If planning to book a holiday in the Canaries, it is best to make a list and check it twice to avoid a big surprise. The archipelago's largest city, Las Palmas (on Gran Canaria), is not to be confused with the island

of La Palma a few dozen miles to its west. Requiring even greater scrutiny is the appellation Santa Cruz, the name of two capital cities (of Tenerife and of nearby La Palma). As to the name Canary, the pretty little songbird took its name from the islands, not the other way around. The term Canary is generally believed to have derived from the Latin term *canariae insulae*, "islands of the dogs," referring to the large wild canines that the Romans wrongly believed roamed on Gran Canaria. Today, visiting the Canary Islands offers no such roaming canines, but roaming plant-lovers will be well rewarded for venturing to this "land of eternal spring." ∞

DANIEL SPARLER teaches at the Northwest School, travels widely and challenges every conceivable notion of zonal appropriateness in his Seattle garden.



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HE SOUGHT AND HE SHARED

Memories of Bruce Briggs

BY FRAN SHARP

I was privileged to enter Bruce Briggs's life at a special time: the beginning of my career and the twilight of his. When I arrived at Briggs Nursery fourteen years ago, fresh from the Midwest, I had no idea



about the world of rhododendrons. Rhododendron 'PJM' was a unique and rare plant in Ohio.

Although "retired," Bruce was at the nursery every day. Yet it was not until the American Rhododendron Society's visit to Olympia

ABOVE: *Hakonechloa macra* 'Beni-kaze,' a recent Briggs Nursery introduction, is a hard-to-find, Japanese selection of this favorite garden grass. It forms a flowing mound of green foliage that takes on striking red tones in the fall. The cultivar name can be translated as "red wind," which perfectly describes the plant's autumn look. **INSET:** The late Bruce Briggs, "the nursery industry's first lobbyist."

that I realized that Bruce was far from ordinary. As the tour of the facility ended, folks lined up to get an autograph and picture with Bruce! Even with this attention, his humble nature prevailed; he just smiled and stood with the group for pictures.

To Seek and to Share

The motto of the International Plant Propagators' Society could well have been Bruce's life motto: *To Seek and to Share*. When he returned to the Briggs Fruit Farm after World War II, Bruce expanded the business to include ornamental plants. His always far-reaching vision was focused towards developing new ways of starting hard-to-propagate plants such as rhododendrons. Through close collaboration with others and years of research and trial and error, techniques became available to produce commercial numbers of ericaceous plants, specifically members of the genera *Rhododendron* and *Kalmia*. Bruce's work laid the foundation for the micropropagation of scores of plants. From garden staples, such as *Syringa* and *Pieris*, to more exotic genera, such as *Agapanthus* and *Hakonechloa*, the list grows each year. Truly, the expansion of the commercially available plant palette can be attributed in great part to Bruce Briggs's work.

Today Briggs Nursery is a thriving plant production machine that propagates over nine million plants each year. But counter to the cold, mechanical operation that might be imagined, Bruce's passion and enthusiasm for plants continues to live on in the nursery's staff. The propagation techniques may be high tech, but the nurturing and care that continue through the plant's life at the nursery remain a tribute to his legacy.

Growing Friendship

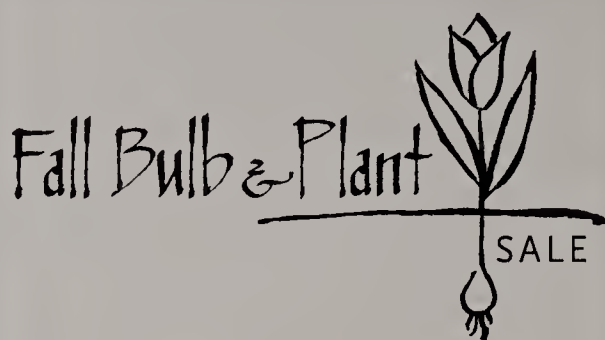
From the time I started working at Briggs Nursery, Bruce and I hit it off very well. After just a few months at the nursery, I was asked to work the Arboretum Foundation's Spring Plant Sale: FlorAbundance. I drove up to

Seattle with Bruce and his wife Doris—another outstanding individual—in their old, woody station wagon and nervously set about the task of arranging the plants. Soon after we arrived, Doris pulled out a PB & J sandwich and juice box for me. They had somehow already discovered I was a vegetarian and thoughtfully fixed me an appropriate lunch. While we sat on the station wagon's tailgate, eating lunch, the anxiety I had been feeling melted with the warmth of their kindness.

Years later, when I worked out of the office, I was treated to daily visits from Bruce. I would hear him walking down the hallway and settle into a routine. I would turn away from my computer, make sure "his" chair was clear, and wait for him to sit and chat. Bruce had an acute awareness of the industry, and he generously shared it with me. We discussed customers, production and the general state of the business of growing and selling plants.

Our friendship grew as we worked on various projects for the nursery and the industry. We packed trees for Arbor Day and then hand-delivered them to legislators at the Washington state capital. My first visit to Washington Park Arboretum occurred with Bruce, for he wanted to share the vision of the then newly-developed Master Plan. On most of these trips we would have to stop for a bite to eat. Although Bruce was supposed to be on a healthy diet, he often ordered his beloved cheeseburgers. I was told not to let Doris know!

The awards and accolades that Bruce received during his life are too many to list. He seemed to take them all modestly in stride, humbly accepting them and always sharing the glory with those with whom he worked. Many of these honors were international in scope and given in recognition of a lifetime of horticultural achievement. Some of the most notable awards include the President's Award from the American Society of Horticultural Science, Nursery Management & Production magazine's Grower of the Year, the International Plant



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Ivan Arneson's new azalea, 'Arneson Cameo,' with single pink blooms, was recently introduced by Briggs Nursery.

Propagators' Society Award of Merit, a gold medal from the American Rhododendron Society and the Veitch Gold Medal from Britain's Royal Horticultural Society.

**"Give it a Try...
Give it a Try"**

When he died, I was honored to sit in Washington's statehouse and hear read a Senate resolution that recognized Bruce's many accomplishments and contributions. Various legislators talked with me afterward, fondly remembering how Bruce would always arrive in their offices with donuts and a small plant. Though no official title was ever awarded, he was truly the nursery industry's first lobbyist. Of course, I am sure the state legislators were always appropriately business-like, but I cannot help but feel that Bruce's death made them think: Darn, no more donuts and cool plants! He—with his unassuming, modest nature—certainly knew how to bring people together, gain consensus and win friends. I smile as I think of how Bruce's donut and plant diplomacy could solve some of today's political stalemates.

Bruce's spirit is still felt today at Briggs Nursery. If you visit, you will notice that in every office there is a framed picture of him. Far from being a mandatory display, the photographs remind those of us who worked with him of how much we enjoyed his smile; and we can still hear him saying, "Give it a try... Give it a try..." ☺

FRAN SHARP worked for Briggs Nursery for 14 years and learned much about the nursery industry, not only Bruce Briggs, but also from the nursery's excellent team. She can be reached at fransharp@comcast.net.



On Becoming a Gardener

OCCASIONAL REFLECTIONS: # 3

People

"My gardening life began with a blind date.

"Oh, sure, you could say gardening is in my genes; half my immigrant grandparents came from big family farms. And as a child, I had some success growing sweet alyssum and love-in-a-mist from seed. As an adult, my greatest plant-related ambition was to keep the rose geranium in the kitchen window alive.

"Then I visited my husband-to-be (after the blind date) and found him pulling spent forget-me-nots from his tulip and dahlia bed. I helped. There was the smell of damp soil; the green emerging dahlias; the leafy rustle from the overhanging black bamboo—I am not sure which I fell in love with first, my husband or the garden. But after 15 years, both affairs continue. And today, I think I will plant more love-in-a-mist."

—MYRNA OUGLAND

"Plants and nature were part of my childhood experiences. Growing up in a Michigan suburb with towering oaks, elms and maples, I loved trees best.

"When I was four or five and stretching to reach the back door knob, I fell into the prickly grip of a large rose bush. I was mighty scratched up and pretty angry at that plant!

"My senior year in high school, I had the good fortune to take an elective horticulture class with Alan Drake, an extremely good-natured and knowledgeable plantsman who instilled in his students a fascination with growing plants. Garden catalogs first met in that class followed me to college, and, finally, I joined my interests in art and the biological sciences by deciding to major in horticulture.

"Gardening has become part of who I am. I still love trees best—perhaps the fault of that prickly rose."

—CHRISTINA PFEIFFER

➤ ➤ ➤



"I grew up with a strong sense of horticulture, though, at the time, I knew it as farming. My paternal grandparents raised vegetables for market in Louisville, Kentucky, on a farm of 10 acres, less than a mile from the Ohio River. The land was rich and fertile, and my earliest memories were of visiting them, walking the farm and picking fresh vegetables.

"All through my youth and early adulthood, I gardened and raised animals: I have always been interested in cultivating living things. When it came time to choose a career, I realized that a degree in horticulture would take less time than a degree in veterinary medicine, so I settled on gardening. I chose North Carolina State University, not knowing it offered one of the best horticulture programs in the country. J. C. Raulston—his positive, indomitable energy and his lust for all plants—was a huge influence on my career. He also gave me a copy of Russell Page's 'Education of a Gardener' and opened my eyes to the world of making gardens, not just collecting plants."

—RICHARD HARTLAGE

"I am a gardener because my father was a stamp collector. Fortunate to attend England's Oxford University in the early 1930s, he fell in love with British Colonial stamps. Later on, he encouraged me to collect stamps too. I will never forget, at age eight, trying to puzzle out the locations of old exotic territories such as Zambezia, Zanzibar and Zululand.

"Prior to collecting plants, I collected birds. My father and I enjoyed bird-watching together. He taught me the joy of identification, whether we were pondering the odd surcharge on an old stamp or trying to verify which flycatcher we might have just glimpsed through the leaves.

"I am also a gardener because my mother sewed my clothes—from the time I was very young, until I was married. She taught me to appreciate the texture and grain of the fabric.

She made sure I knew that red was not just red and that there were many different sorts of fabric to choose from, some easier to wash and iron than others. After her three daughters no longer needed her regular expertise as a seamstress, she became a docent for the local art museum and encouraged all of her children to learn about the importance of expressing themselves artistically.

"Long ago, I gave up trying to match my mother's skills as a seamstress. Equally long ago, I stopped collecting stamps. But I inherited my father's British Colonial stamp collection and I always think of him when I see a new bird. His interest in collections and my mother's interest in color, texture and art have come together in my love of gardening: an inheritance they never expected to bestow."

—LEE NEFF

"I have a theory that devoted gardeners become that way because of some early childhood experience. For me, it was the fact that, in the third grade, I moved from the University District, packed with kids, to Magnolia, a place with widely-spaced homes and nary a playmate in sight. By necessity, I learned to amuse myself, alone, in the yard. But what a yard it was!

"The garden and the pets became my companions. My older sister showed me how to make a sachet of rose petals. But I was prone to less lady-like pursuits. I hypnotized the pet chickens with a string. I played 'chase' with the cats. They caught garter snakes, and so did I. Once I even skinned and 'tanned' a dead mole (poor thing) they'd brought in. And I spent hours in the tree house, camped out in the tool shed and climbed frighteningly high in the fir tree.

"I grew up and forgot all about the outdoors. Eventually, I went to college: Fairhaven, in Bellingham. It was one of those 'hippy' colleges where the goal was to 'find yourself,' and eventually to get a 'job you love,' not a profession to make money. Imagine my surprise when I graduated and realized

that I wasn't qualified to do anything—or so it seemed. So I took a job with Seattle Parks and Recreation and stayed seven years on the grounds' crew at Discovery Park.

"While I was working as a crew leader, in charge of maintaining Queen Anne and downtown parks, Seattle Parks decided to hire horticulturally trained 'gardeners-in-the-park.' My district got Andrea, and she became my mentor. Andrea talked about plants like they were something special. She knew all their names, common and botanical—hundreds of them! She knew other things too. I stayed close to her and caught the gardening bug. She showed me transplanting and mulching. She explained the difference between annuals and perennials, and how deep to plant bulbs.

"Andrea also took me with her to Parsons' Gardens—a tiny, hidden park atop Queen Anne Hill that desperately needed renovating. There were so many different shrubs there: kerria, double-file viburnum, silverlace vine, wisteria, stranvaesia, winter camellia. I fell in love with the garden. It was beautiful and secluded, like the garden of my childhood. There Andrea taught me the magical art of pruning. I looked on as she reached inside a mistreated and misshapen shrub with her secateurs. With every pruning cut, Andrea explained her reasoning: 'Wrong way,' 'too crowded,' 'kinked' and so on. To my amazement, the 'sow's ear' of a shrub was soon transformed into a 'silk purse.' I thought to myself, 'I want to learn how to do that!'

"Today I really do have the 'job you love'—renovating overgrown and neglected gardens. Lucky me. I credit Andrea and Parsons' Gardens with putting me back in touch with my love of nature. She opened another door in my life, the door to the joys of gardening.

—CASS TURNBULL

"Our first interest began with the Arboretum Foundation, where we met Mary Pinkham, and other women like her, and a few men like John McDonnell. Then I started taking rhodies seriously, and Janet wanted bouquets for the

house. So we grew both. We attended meetings and joined every group in sight. And I began propagating things from cuttings, as if I knew what I was doing. Then I met Mr. Pierce in West Seattle, who gave me a "no-suchianum"—a cross between a rhody and a mountain laurel (impossible to do, he told me) that I still have growing in our garden.

"We garden, mainly, because we love the people we meet who share our gardening interest. Our love of the people makes learning about plants just that much more interesting. We have special trees suggested by Joe Witt and Margaret Lockett; perennials and shrubs because of Lee Clarke, Brian Mulligan, Bob Lilly and Dan Hinkley; wonderful bulbs because of Jane Rogers and Jeanne Gardiner. And we grew plants from gift-cuttings from many other gardening friends, the Arboretum greenhouse and Plant Donations.

"Our big event was hiring Terry Welch to design a garden on about half an acre below our house. We wanted a garden to walk through, a "strolling garden." Fifteen years later we hired Welch to design a Japanese-looking garden on a lot we purchased across the street. It has a water feature and sweeps of plants that make it look loyed. This is our neighborhood garden. Neighbors are invited to use and enjoy it. We believe that the more friends it has, the greater love it receives.

"What kind of garden do we have? We have a garden of friends—many of them. We are very lucky."

—T. KEITH PATRICK

All of these reflections come from gardeners who continue to support Washington Park Arboretum and its Bulletin by serving on the Bulletin's Editorial Board, writing for the Bulletin or eagerly reading about the experiences shared in its articles. ∞



One Reader's Favorites

BY BRIAN R. THOMPSON

Writing an article for Lee Neff's review is pure pleasure. Every book I have pitched she has embraced, always affirming my selections from the myriad gardening titles available. But what is **her** short list of favorite books? With this final issue of her editorship of the Bulletin, it seemed like the perfect time to ask.

The Wisdom of Farming

We met for lunch... Lee wisely knows that food is an important part of any meeting. But first she handed me a small, red leather bound book—clearly very old. “I don’t think you have this in the Miller Library.” She is right; we have very little on mid-19th century farming in Indiana. But “Plain and Pleasant Talk About Fruits, Flowers and Farming” was just the first of several surprising choices.

While filled with all manner of practical advice on raising plants for food and pleasure, this work by the famed clergyman Henry Ward Beecher (younger brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe and subject of this year’s winner of the Pulitzer Prize in Biography: “The Most Famous Man in America” by Debby Applegate) includes much philosophical advice, too. Lee finds “every topic is of interest.”

Lee read me an example. “As the winter is a season of comparative leisure, it is the time for farmers to study”... “Farmers are liable to rely wholly upon their own experience, and to despise science. Bookmen are apt to rely on scientific theories, and nothing upon practice. If these two tendencies would only



court and marry each other, what a hopeful family would they rear!”

First Books

Over our sandwiches, I expected to take lots of notes, but Lee—ever efficient and prepared, as she has been for years of editorial board meetings, and as a school teacher before that—gave me several pages of a typed, annotated bibliography. On these she listed her favorite titles, why each is special, and some of her general thoughts about good writing. My review was as good as done!

But I still had a few questions. Foremost, what makes a good gardening book? For Lee, that book is both “educational and inspirational—good both for bedtime reading and for teaching the reader something.”

Like many gardeners, Lee began her study with books from series such as Time-Life and Harrowsmith. But soon she moved on, reading popular authors of the time (the early 1980s) and earlier, including Helen Van Pelt Wilson’s “Successful Gardening with Perennials” and “The Fragrant Year,” the latter richly supplemented by Leonie Bell’s illustrations.

Among early discoveries was Elizabeth Lawrence. At this point in our chat, Lee summed up what makes a good author: voice. An author needs a clear and personal voice. Lawrence is a fine example; she speaks of unique experience, in her own distinctive style, with stories that we can understand and identify with as gardeners.

While Lee likes all of Lawrence’s work, her first choice is “Gardens in Winter.” The

description of Zone 8 winters in North Carolina inspired many of Lee's more experimental plant choices. Other must-reads include "A Southern Garden" and "Through the Garden Gate."

A gardening author's voice can be found in unexpected places. Lee was familiar with Czech writer Karel Čapek and his dark and probing speculation about the future of humanity found in "War with the Newts" and other novels. But she discovered a very different side of him in "The Gardener's Year"—his gentle humor about the relationship between gardener and garden that sets the tone in the opening sentence: "There are several different ways to lay out a garden; the best way is to get a gardener."

Other Voices

Several other favorites have powerful voices. Colorado author and gardener Lauren Springer provides encouragement from her personal saga of growing plants in an unforgiving climate in "The Undaunted Garden," an important 1994 work that Lee fears is at risk of being forgotten. From Springer, Lee learned to love dwarf and median bearded iris.

"Gardening from the Heart," Carol Olwell's collection of interviews with gardeners—including several from the Pacific Northwest—provides Lee "every reason to garden." She read "every word" but suggested this book may be best for the experienced gardener, validating the impact of the garden on the human condition.

The Heronswood catalogs authored by Dan Hinkley—how important will these be in the long run? Lee will not speculate, but they are more than a plant list; she reads them as the personal journey of an important plantsman. They also prove that "truly excellent writing doesn't require color photographs," a theme that runs through all her choices.

She also appreciates Dan's politics and wit, wishing she had "bought a whole garden's worth of *Clintonia thosewerethedaisyii*."

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Joe Eck and Wayne Winterrowd have authored many articles and books—both separately and together—but in “Living Seasonally: The Kitchen Garden and the Table at North Hill” they share their home, their lives and their kitchen. Again, Lee admires the “integration of the garden with the lives of the gardeners.” This book also includes a superior recipe for roasted tomatoes.

For the Beginner

Always the teacher, Lee made sure I knew her top choices for beginning gardeners. A good package for these newcomers would include:

Ketzel Levine’s “Plant This!”—plant suggestions for year-round gardening. (“It could use a few more suggestions for fall.”)

Beth Chatto’s “Plant Portraits”—similar to Ketzel with good choices for all seasons, about 200 words on each selection with little overlap. Chatto has also written many other excellent books, including “The Green Tapestry” and “Beth Chatto’s Gravel Garden.”

Nicola Ferguson’s “Right Plant, Right Place”—this directory for matching plants to suitable conditions is “truly indispensable when learning about gardening.” The lists of plants suitable for dry shade and dense shade led Lee to “search out epimediums and to try *Ruscus aculeatus*.”

“Plants That Merit Attention, Volume I – Trees,” edited by Janet Poor, gives the beginner a reference for considering a selection of trees for the garden, a subject somewhat overlooked in the previous three choices. Lee “met this book” when she was just learning about trees. “It is fabulous,” she adds, “and easier to use than the companion Volume II on shrubs.”

These four were in the first package, but later Lee added Hugh Johnson’s “The Principles of Gardening,” which asks and answers “everything for the new gardener.”

Briefly Mentioned

It is very clear that Lee’s shelf of favorite books stretches beyond the eye’s view. Other

favorite authors, briefly mentioned, include Mary Keen (“Creating a Garden”—good on design), Eleanor Perenyi (“Green Thoughts”), and Katherine S. White (“Onward and Upward in the Garden”—which points to other good authors and the best nursery catalogs of its era, including those of the “much-mourned” Lamb’s Nursery in Spokane). All of these—and every other book on Lee’s list except for the Beecher—are available to read in the Miller Library.

Our sandwiches long done, Lee concluded her thoughts and our lunch with these final words: “The best gardening books, like ‘best books’ in general, can be read again and again and appreciated for the quality of thought and expression combined therein.” I can’t think of any better collection policy for a home garden library! ♪

BRIAN R. THOMPSON is the Curator of Horticultural Literature at the Elisabeth C. Miller Library of the University of Washington Botanic Gardens. He has never tired of the lessons learned from Lee’s careful craft of editing—how she finds what his voice is trying to say and, with a minimum of change, makes it infinitely clearer.

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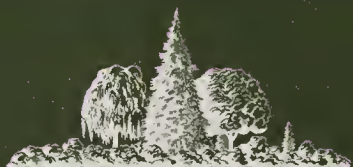
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