

Washington Park Arboretum

BULLETIN



Published by the Arboretum Foundation

Fall 2003

\$5

Washington Park Arboretum Bulletin
Published quarterly by the Arboretum Foundation
for the Washington Park Arboretum

Washington Park Arboretum

The Arboretum is a 230-acre living museum displaying internationally renowned collections of oaks, conifers, camellias, Japanese maples, hollies and a profusion of woody plants from the Pacific Northwest and around the world. Aesthetic enjoyment gracefully co-exists with science in this spectacular urban green space on the shores of Lake Washington. Visitors come to learn, explore, relax or reflect in Seattle's largest public garden.

The Washington Park Arboretum is managed cooperatively by the University of Washington and Seattle Parks and Recreation; the Arboretum Foundation is its major support organization.

Graham Visitors Center

Open 10 AM—4 PM daily;
holidays, NOON—4 PM.

Closed Thanksgiving and the Friday after,
Christmas and New Year's Day.

The Arboretum is accessible by Metro bus #43 from downtown Seattle and the University of Washington campus

Arboretum Foundation

The Arboretum Foundation is a nonprofit organization established in 1935 to ensure stewardship for the Washington Park Arboretum and to provide horticultural leadership for the region. The Foundation provides funding, volunteer services, membership programs and public information in support of the Arboretum, its plant collections and programs. Volunteers operate the gift shop, conduct major fund-raising events, and further their gardening knowledge through study groups and hands-on work in the greenhouse or grounds.

2300 Arboretum Drive East, Seattle, WA 98112
206-325-4510 voice / 206-325-8893 fax
gvc@arboretumfoundation.org
www.arboretumfoundation.org
Office hours: 8:30 AM—4:30 PM weekdays
Gift shop hours: 10 AM—4 PM daily

Officers of the Arboretum Foundation Board of Directors

Deborah Andrews, Executive Director

Fred Isaac, President	Kate Roosevelt, Vice President
Mike Allen, Vice President	Boone Barker, Treasurer
Susan Black, Vice President	Della Balick, Secretary
Neal Lessenger, Vice President	David Hervey, Immediate Past President

University of Washington

The University of Washington manages the Arboretum's collections, horticultural programs, facilities and education programs through its Center for Urban Horticulture.

206-543-8800 voice / 206-616-2871 fax
Office hours: 8 AM—5 PM weekdays
www.wparboretum.org

Washington Park Arboretum

John A. Wott, Ph.D., Director

Center for Urban Horticulture

Thomas M. Hinckley, Ph.D., Director

Seattle Parks and Recreation

The City of Seattle owns the Arboretum's land, including the buildings. Seattle Parks and Recreation is responsible for routine maintenance within the Arboretum and manages and operates the Japanese Garden.

206-684-4556 voice / 206-684-4304 fax
Ken Bounds, Superintendent

Washington Park Arboretum Bulletin

Lee Cuninggim Neff,
Editor

Bryan Taulbee,
Arboretum Foundation

Constance Bollen,
Graphic Design

Joy Spurr, Photography
(unless otherwise noted)

Editorial Board

Tom Berger, The Berger
Partnership, Landscape
Architects

Val Easton, Writer

Polly Hankin, Edmonds
Community College

Richard W. Hartlage,
Dietz/Hartlage
Landscape Architecture

Daniel J. Hinkley,
Heronwood Nursery

Joan Hockaday, Author
Steven R. Lorton, Northwest
Bureau Chief, "Sunset"
Magazine

Kimberly Mills, Writer/Editor
& Arboretum Guide

Ciscoe Morris, Horticulturist
Myrna Ougland,
Heronwood Nursery

Pam Perry, Parsons Public
Relations

Christina Pfeiffer,
Horticultural Consultant

Jan Pirzio-Biroli,
Arboretum Foundation

Holly M. Redell, Director
of Development, Pacific
Science Center

David Streatfield, UW Dept.
of Landscape Architecture

Eleanor Thienes, Landscape
Designer

Brian Thompson, Elisabeth
C. Miller Library, CUH

Cass Turnbull, Plant
Amnesty Founder

Martha Wingate, Writer

Botanical Editors

Randall Hitchin, Registrar
and Collections Manager

Jan Pirzio-Biroli

Martha Wingate

For a rate card or other information about
advertising in the *Arboretum Bulletin*,
please call the Foundation office, 206-325-4510.

Fall 2003 Volume 65, Issue 3.
© 2003 The Arboretum Foundation. ISSN 1046-8749.

CONTENTS

- 2 “Something Special” for Everybody
—*Deborah Andrews*
- 3 **COMBINATIONS UNLOCKED:** The Whys & Wherefores of Favorite Plant Combinations, # 6 Primary Colors—A Rock Garden in Autumn—*Lee C. Neff*
- 4 From ‘Picturesque’ to ‘Gardenesque’: Gardens by the Olmsted Brothers in Western Washington
—*David C. Streatfield*
- 10 Olmsted Gardens in a Contemporary Context—*Thomas Berger*
- 16 Fall Blooming Corms: Almost Instant Gratification—*Myrna Ougland*
- 20 Paper Sacks of Hidden Treasure
—*Jackie Hightower*
- 24 Growing Figs (*Ficus carica*) in the Pacific Northwest
—*Hildegard R. Hendrickson*
- 29 HORT 101
- 30 **IN A GARDEN LIBRARY:** Ahhh, Time to Read—*Brian Thompson*, *Bulletin Book Review Editor*



ON THE COVER: The cover photograph, “Red & Yellow,” was taken by Jeff Krewson, a local, professional photographer who often finds inspiration in the Arboretum. More of his work can be seen at www.jeffkrewson.com.

CORRECTION: In the Summer, 2003, issue of the Bulletin we erroneously named the light brahma chicken, pictured on page 10, Dot. Actually, the chicken being walked by Isabell Fillipo in that photograph is Daisy.

ABOVE: This trail in the New Zealand high country garden wanders between two boulders mimicking a small mountain pass and framing a tall *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* var *magnificum*, dressed in splendid autumn gold, in the distance.

"Something Special" for Everybody!

This past summer at the Arboretum was lively with anticipation. The success of the Arbor Vita Garden Party on July 26 was just the beginning of the celebratory air. On July 31 the draft implementation plan of the Arboretum's master plan was presented at an open house for Foundation members and neighbors. As a result, excitement about implementing projects is already building.

The draft implementation plan was created in May, 2003, when a group representing the University of Washington, the city of Seattle, the Arboretum Foundation and the community participated in a workshop to discuss implementation of the Arboretum's master plan. The workshop was designed to establish priorities, define opportunities, and ultimately create manageable project packages. The final goal of the workshop was to identify the top three projects and create a draft implementation plan.

During the workshop, the group identified 29 projects that would fully implement the master plan and grouped them into three categories: High Priority Projects, Medium Priority Projects, and Future Priority Projects. In the next three issues of the Bulletin, I will discuss these categories and the list of associated projects in detail. Among them are special opportunities to support and improve the Arboretum to appeal to everybody.

Last summer, too, I received the following email message:

Deb and Editors of the BULLETIN

The Summer 2003 issue of the quarterly is just wonderful. One of the best issues I've ever read. And I read them all cover to cover. The broad range of subjects—history, as in Richard Walker's Joseph Rock material and Steve Lorton's "Master Gardening @ 30." Dan Hinkley's always popular plant explorations, and Cass Turnbull's how-to on pruning the difficult ones. And having the chicken item was frosting on the cake. You must have caught everybody with something special this time.

Keep up the good work.

Helen Engle

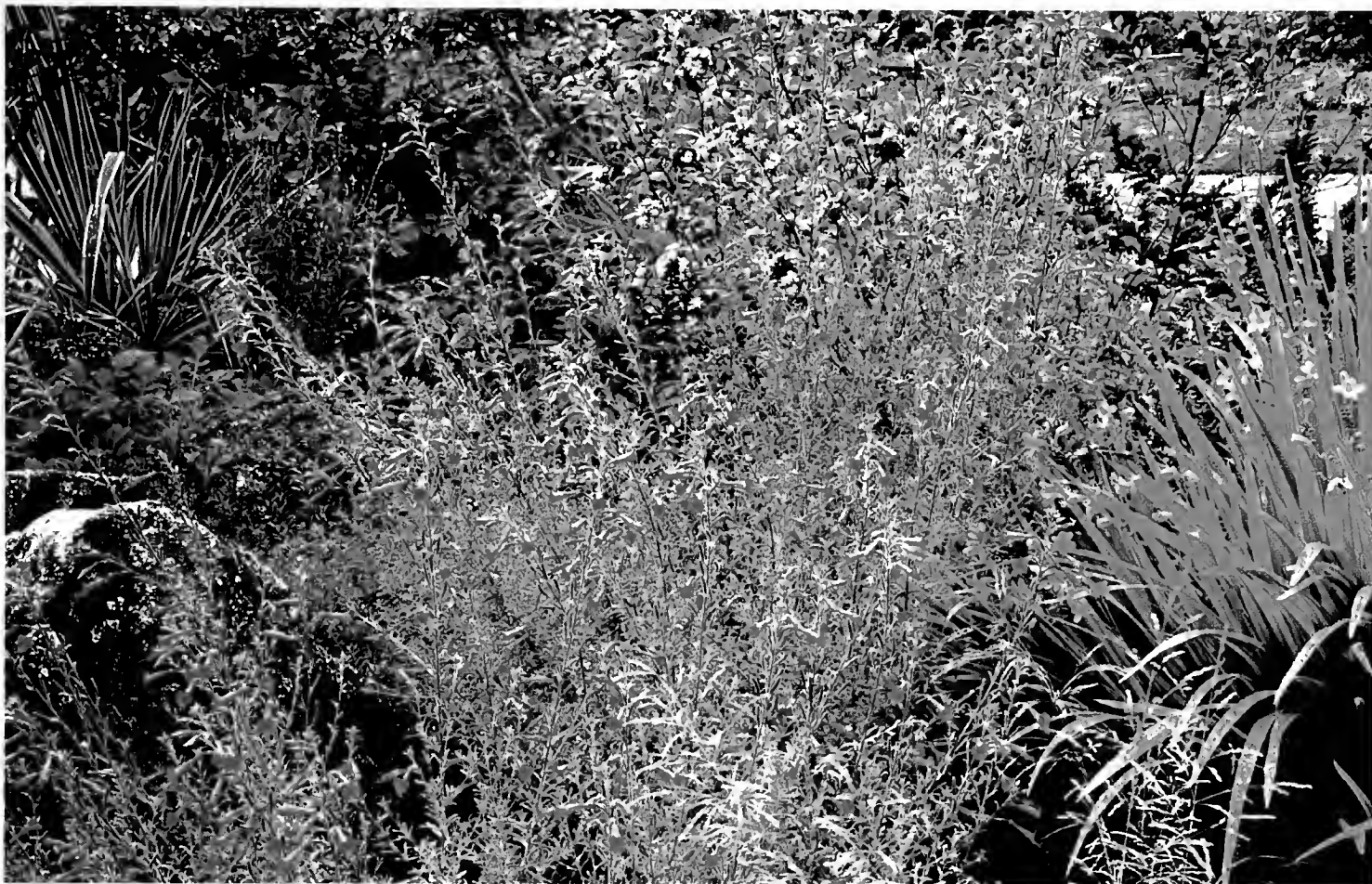
Thanks to all of you who support the varied and exciting work we do at the Foundation to benefit the Washington Park Arboretum!



Deborah Andrews, Executive Director,
Arboretum Foundation



This alluring autumn path, surrounded by fall color, can be enjoyed on a stroll between the ponds in the Woodland Garden.



COMBINATIONS UNLOCKED

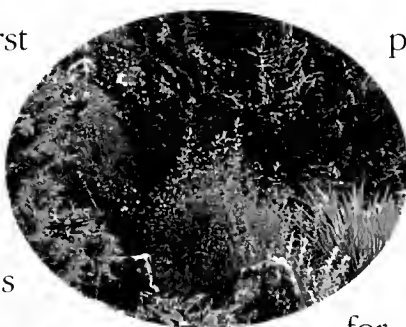
The Whys & Wherefores of Favorite Plant Combinations

#6: Primary Colors—A Rock Garden in Autumn

BY LEE C. NEFF

To be truthful, when first planning and planting our rock garden, I only thought about spring. For a gritty slope is just the place for a collection of dwarf narcissus, species tulips, and Pacific coast iris.

All it took was a season or two of spring show to prove that the rock garden looked



pretty dull the rest of the year—despite a growing collection of small conifers and a few phormiums and yuccas, planted for the foliar relief of their upright spikiness.

Clearly research was required, for this area of the garden is almost

continues on page 28

A September portrait of primary colors: The blossoms of red California fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*) are backed by the blue blooms of Chinese plumbago (*Ceratostigma willmottianum*) and framed by the lemon-yellow flowers of *Crocosmia* 'Citronella' on the right and the foliage of *Yucca filamentosa* 'Bright Edge' on the left.

FROM 'PICTURESQUE' TO 'GARDENESQUE'

Gardens by the Olmsted Brothers in Western Washington

BY DAVID C. STREATFIELD

The centenary of Seattle's ambitious parks system has ensured that the work of the Olmsted Brothers firm is neither forgotten nor confused with that of the senior Frederick Law Olmsted, often called the father of American landscape architecture. The firm's invaluable contribution to the design of Seattle's parks system and many other public landscapes in the Pacific Northwest is now widely acknowledged. But the focus on public spaces has obscured the firm's much more hidden but equally signifi-

cant contribution to garden design. The Olmsted Brothers' extensive residential practice includes 141 gardens in Washington state alone—41 in Spokane, 40 in Seattle, and 31 in the exclusive gated community of The Highlands.

The Designers

All of these gardens were designed by John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920)—the nephew and stepson of Frederick Law

The curved drive and sweeping beds of this view of the Chester Thorne house (1908) on American Lake were designed in the Picturesque style. The Thorne property was the largest Washington garden designed by the Olmsted Brothers firm.



Olmsted and the senior partner in the firm—and his associate James Frederick Dawson (1874-1941). John Charles was responsible for all public and residential projects until 1914 when he ceased to travel for health reasons. From 1914 until his death in 1941 Dawson assumed responsibility for all garden designs in the Pacific Northwest and elsewhere on the West Coast.

Between 1908 and the early 1940s, Olmsted and Dawson established the first coherent approach to landscape design in this region. This accomplishment is important in this region's garden history, but it is all the more remarkable since it was done by remote control. The firm's office was in Brookline, Massachusetts, and consequently the partners were not able to visit Northwest job sites very



This view of the Chester Thorne house and garden reveals surprisingly formal gardens, designed in tones of blue, lavender, gray and purple, colors that would have pleased English garden designer and writer Gertrude Jekyll.

often because of long train journeys. Many clients were somewhat irritated by the long delays caused by communicating only through letters or telegrams. This problem was largely eliminated after 1922 when the firm opened an office at Redondo Beach, California, to manage the new town of Palos Verdes as well as all other West Coast projects.

Olmsted Brothers' Garden Designs

What constitutes an Olmsted Brothers garden? Since their gardens range in size from 125 acres to 2 acres down to a city block, this question might appear to be impossible to answer. Simply put, the firm employed two approaches to garden design. The "Picturesque" gardens designed by John Charles were heavily influenced by his step-father's design theories. Inspired by what he had seen in Europe, the senior Olmsted wanted Americans to spend more time out of doors. He thought American gardens should provide varied "attractive open-air apartments" so that their owners could live in the garden, protected from the sun, wind and rain.

These garden "rooms" employed Picturesque compositional techniques, such as long curving lawns and curving paths to create a sense of perspective and increased size. Olmsted's concern for "positive beauty" was effected by using subtle gradations in color, form and texture.

John Charles' regionalized version of this Picturesque design type centered on irregular lawn spaces defined by layered masses



of trees and shrubs coupled with a limited use of formal features, such as walled gardens, which were invariably hidden by planting. He emphasized capturing views of the distant mountains and bodies of water as an important way to create long, perspectival vistas and enhance a greater sense of space.

Dawson combined design training from John Charles with a formidable knowledge

of plants, acquired under his father's tutelage at the Arnold Arboretum. His designs moved away from Picturesque restraint and harmony, and by the mid-teens he was designing in what he called a "gardenesque" or garden-like manner. His designs became more decorative, employing a range of flowering trees and shrubs that were virtually identical to those he employed in Eastern gardens he was designing at the same time.

The following examples with quotations from original correspondence suggest the range and evolving character of the firm's garden designs over some 30 years.

Picturesque Gardens

A grand country estate, the Chester Thorne property (1908) on American Lake, was the firm's largest garden in Washington. John Charles advised the Thornes that their grounds "should be made to conform" to the siting of the house, assuming that the east wing would point directly toward what he called Mt. Tacoma (Mt. Rainier). "It seems to us this is an important matter." However, Thorne's architect changed the orientation, which forced John Charles to create a



The home of Charles Clarke (1910), who hoped to bring "the wildness of the woods down to the house," is located in The Highlands.

brilliant surprise, a *bortus conclusus*.

Most of the property comprised tall fir trees that were not much appreciated by the fastidious John Charles, accustomed as he was to New England's more pastoral, deciduous scenery. "It would probably be best to thin out the most crowded of the fir trees, leaving those with low enough branches to be capable of making fairly good looking trees, then oaks and other deciduous trees could be added which

in time would relieve the monotony and gloominess of the fir."

The centerpiece of the garden among the embellished fir trees was a pair of detached, walled and luxuriantly planted gardens forming a *bortus conclusus*. The entrance was through a richly planted, semi-circular water garden designed in the Jacobean manner. In the much larger adjoining garden, three of the high brick walls were heavily planted with old roses, such as 'Maréchal Niel' and 'Madame Alfred Carrière.' The small, central lawn was framed by shallow tiers of Jekyllesque plantings of misty blues and lavenders, pale pink, gray and purple, and structured with tubs of oranges and bay trees wintered in the greenhouse. However, the fourth side opened to a vista through the firs flanked by a pair of low, battlemented teahouses linked by a low, stone balustrade to reveal a magnificent view of "Mount Tacoma."

Unlike this carefully contrived garden, which was considered one of the three finest gardens in the country in the 1930s, Charles Clarke (1910) sought to bring "the wildness of the woods down to the house" at his property in The Highlands. Dawson's proposed design included a small lawn on

the east side and lawns on the west and south sides treated as uncut meadows with many wild flowers—which did not satisfy Clarke who complained to John Charles. “I thought it was clearly understood between Mr. Dawson and myself that there was to be no lawn anywhere. I was expecting the open places to be filled with wild grasses and wild flowers.”

Away from the house, along the woodland trails, the new planting blended seamlessly with native plants through the use of wild asters, hepaticas, *Smilacina racemosa*, *Uvularia grandiflora*, wild violets, lady’s slippers, columbines, and harebells.

By contrast, John Charles sited the large C. D. Stimson house (1912) to command “the best view of the Olympic Mountains,” as well as northern views into a deep and wide ravine. Perched high at the north end of the steep western bluff, many considered this to be the finest property in The Highlands. The gatehouse entrance gave on to a curving drive planted with natives, such as maples, hemlocks, spiraea, and mock orange, together with magnolias and flowering plums. The motor court in front of the house was designed on “a more dignified idea” than the main garden space. Its central bed was planted with five groups of rhododendrons, the remainder being in ground cover; a very dwarf form of rhododendron, St. John’s wort, periwinkle, and a group of mollis azaleas. Large English hollies and a group of mountain laurels were planted against the *porte cochere*, and the adjoining wall was planted with kalmias, spiraea, viburnums, trilliums, snakeroots, bloodroot, campanulas, saxifrages, Christmas



This aerial view of the C. D. Stimson house “Norcliffe” (1912) shows its location high on the steep western bluff in The Highlands.

rose, lily of the valley and a large group of dark red with a few white rhododendrons.

The large, irregular lawn was defined by spiraeas, lilacs, and hydrangeas planted in irregular masses to provide a natural outline and “at the same time to add as much mystery as possible.” These shrubs were selected “to give attractive effects in the early spring and during the summer.” Behind them a curving walk

traversed the lip of the northern ravine and the top of the steep western bluff. This provided a multiplicity of views back to the house across the lawn and west and south over the Sound toward the Olympic Mountains. Curving in and out among the shrubs, the walk terminated at a south-facing, octagonal summerhouse commanding panoramic views down the Sound.

Gardenesque Designs

John Agen’s (1916) long, rectangular 10-acre property, a few blocks south of The Highlands, was not on the Sound, and the house was accordingly sited close to the property’s western boundary so that views of the mountains could be created by carefully pruning out “windows” in the boundary fir plantations. The long drive was designed to provide diverse views with planting on both sides intended “to be woodsy in character, especially on the north side,” with open spaces and a ground cover of salal, creeping mahonia, and foxgloves under the trees, while on the south side more open planting provided views of the plants screening the formally ordered complex of vegetable garden, croquet lawn

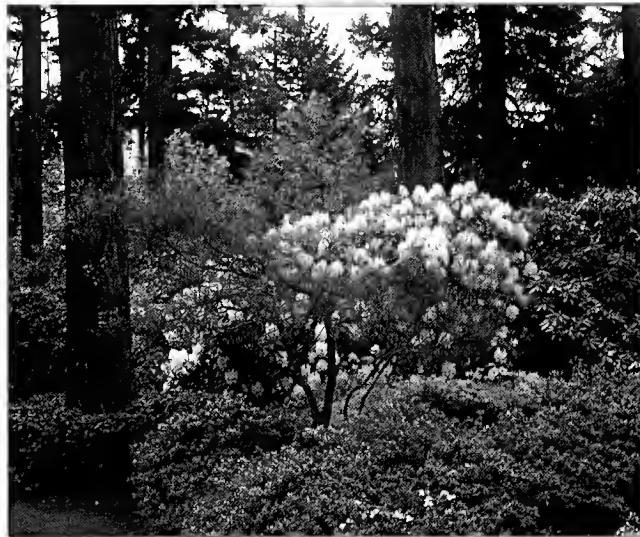
and tennis court. Nearer the house the planting became more refined, with masses of mountain laurel, yellow and white broom, etc. The planting in the turn-around in front of the house was largely evergreen, with a few choice rhododendrons, such as 'Pink Pearl,' together with groups of peonies. The Olmsteds used hybrid rhododendrons rather than natives since they seemed to perform better. The planting against the house was largely herbaceous in nature with groups of "choice shrubs such as Harrison's yellow rose, the Mexican orange, and Chinese Abelia."

The Olmsted firm was especially adept at sculpting the ground plane, and the undulating lawn here is most distinguished. West of the house the shrubbery grouping used plantings of "a decorative and gardenesque type, with groups of rhododendrons, azaleas, etc.," while the southern lawn was planted with roses. In other gardens this facer layer would be a mixture of native and non-native plants, such as hollies, dogwoods, evergreen huckleberries, viburnums, madronas and native lilacs. This garden provided diagonal and framed views of the mountains, through the carefully trimmed boundary firs, and internal, diagonal views, to and from the house, of subsidiary structures, such as a small (unbuilt) garden



This long view of John Agen's property, designed in 1916, shows it to be "woody in character" with shrubbery plantings of "a decorative and gardenesque type."

The Edward Garrett estate in The Highlands with naturalistic, ornamental plantings among the firs.



shelter at the end of the tennis court.

The Edward Garrett estate (1936-1941) in The Highlands was one of the last gardens designed by Dawson. The elegant, symmetrical house faces a wide western vista cut through the firs which Dawson proposed to soften with "naturalistic planting cutting into the side of the forest" using Eastern dogwoods, flowering crabapples, and Japanese magnolias. This did not please Mrs. Garrett, who was a keen gardener. She criticized this proposal saying, "I am very eager to keep this more subdued and in keeping with the forests that flank the vista on either side. We do not want to thin out those woods to the extent indicated on the plan, nor to plant anything but ferns, heather, dogwood, salal, and Oregon grape in those

woods." She also rejected Dawson's advice to use only "standards," feeling that this was inappropriate in a woodland setting. However, she was pleased by his suggestion to plant the ground of the vista between the tall, flanking stands of firs with a mixture of heathers, a plant she had discovered on a visit to the Coe estate on Long Island, also an Olmsted Brothers design.

Dawson created an unusual formal planting scheme on the south side of the house following the architect's conceptual

scheme for a semi-circular lawn. The space was defined by rhododendrons placed among the fir trees in beds separated by turf paths. Since she was especially fond of yellow and purple flowers, Mrs. Garrett inquired about the proposed blossom color. "Is your planting all pink-red-white?" Dawson had purposely confined the purple rhododendrons to the edge of the west vista. However, he explained that she could plant them on the south side, "but I suggest that you combine them with Album Elegans." He also suggested using some rarer selections of Loderi rhododendron, "which is in a class by itself."

Undiminished Contributions

Between 1908 and the early 1940s John Charles Olmsted and James Frederick Dawson established the first coherent approach to garden design in the Pacific Northwest. In the early Picturesque designs, John Charles employed subtle grading and layered plantings of native and non-native shrubs and trees to soften the "gloom" of native firs. Dawson's later gardenesque designs employed more decorative planting and were similar to the firm's east coast designs.

Both design types were fashioned for upper-class clients, and their potential for serving a broader clientele did not materialize because they were never codified in a usable way. Yet this in no way diminishes the importance of John Charles Olmsted's and James Dawson's contributions to garden design, which was as significant as their much better known public works in the Pacific Northwest. ∞

DAVID STREATFIELD is Professor of Landscape Architecture, Urban Design & Planning at the University of Washington as well as a long-term member of the Bulletin's Editorial Board.

Briggs Nursery's 2004 Plant of the Year Rhododendron 'Capistrano'



For the
Best Quality
Rhododendrons
in the
Northwest...

Rely on
Briggs Nursery.



Ask for them at your
favorite garden center.



Olmsted Gardens in a Contemporary Context

BY THOMAS BERGER

The Olmsted Brothers firm introduced the first coherent landscape design idiom for the Pacific Northwest region. This was most clearly expressed in their public park designs in Seattle and in their little-known estate gardens. Recognizing the historical importance of this design tradition inevitably raises the question of how surviving examples of their gardens should be treated in a contemporary context of changed uses, increased horticultural expertise and a vastly increased plant palette. Should

contemporary owners feel obliged to restore or rehabilitate Olmsted gardens exactly according to the original design? How adaptable are Olmstedian principles to contemporary circumstances?

The Olmsted View

In attempting to answer these questions it is important to imagine what the partners of The Olmsted Brothers—John Charles Olmsted and his junior associate James Frederick Dawson—saw when they first walked over

This photograph of the C. D. Stimson house shows early garden development with impressive light levels, an elegant lawn and carefully sited specimen trees but few terraces for daily use.

sites in this region. John Charles enthused over the beauty of the views of mountains and expanses of water in preparing his park report for Seattle. At The Highlands, north of Seattle, where many of their gardens are located, they looked at an area that had recently been logged and, in part, burned. Despite the presence of a few large trees, most trees were small. The large trees became the edges of meadow-like spaces. These areas were retained, and vast view corridors were either left or created to capture mountain views west to Puget Sound

Carefully framed outward views remained the principal feature of an Olmsted garden until the late 1930s. Careful siting of the houses at The Highlands enabled owners to enjoy considerable

privacy, since no house could be seen from the winding roads, and the curvilinear meadow-like spaces created illusions of greater space.

These garden spaces were distinctive in their grading and the range of plants used. Using small graders, the topography was refashioned into gently undulating sculptural forms that set off the Olmsted firm's very distinctive planting manner. Some of the firm's Seattle park reports suggest a negative reaction to the tall, dark, native forest trees. This is not surprising, since they were accustomed to designing in deciduous landscapes. Careful gradations of texture and color were combined in transitional masses of small trees and shrubs



The sensitive siting of the Paul Henry residence was designed to protect trees while preserving distant views.

This pond and garden walk at the Walter Douglas residence, newly designed 70 years ago, is now surrounded by 80-foot trees.



placed against the tall trees. This approach created a sense of garden spaces lying within the forest. This form of planting reduced what remained of the native forest to a visual background, setting off a new foreground mixture of lower growing natives and hardy exotic plants.

The firm's new design tradition created landscape settings of house and garden that were in harmony with the distinctive topography, vegetation, and climate of the Pacific Northwest.

Gardening in a New Era

However, over 70 years have passed since these gardens were created for a time and context of quite different uses and maintenance. In the first three decades of the 20th century,

gardens were designed largely to be looked at and strolled through in a leisurely way. Several gardeners maintained them for owners who rarely worked in them except to cut flowers for bouquets. Gardens are used today for large scale entertaining, outdoor meals, and informal living. Olmsted gardens lack large terraces or patios, and do not appear to have been used for dining. It is very unusual to see an Olmsted garden with a cooking facility except for a large outdoor grill of the kind found in parks, which was almost certainly installed by later owners.

In addition to using gardens for a less formal lifestyle, today's gardeners have access to a greater range of available plants. When



WASHINGTON PARK ARBORETUM

A Photographer's Paradise

*The Arboretum Foundation and the Bulletin
present an Arboretum Photo Contest*

Professional and amateur photographers are encouraged to submit photos in five categories:

- Plant Portraits
- Landscapes
- Seasons
- Life in the Arboretum
- Japanese Garden

Winning photos will be published in the Bulletin and the Seattle Post-Intelligencer next year. All competing photos will be displayed in the Graham Visitors Center at a special reception in April 2004. Photos must be received by March 1, 2004.

For complete guidelines call 206-325-4510 or go to www.arboretumfoundation.org.

Presented by the Arboretum Foundation, with support from the Seattle Post-Intelligencer



Seattle Post-Intelligencer

the Olmsteds designed gardens in this region there were no specialty nurseries. They advised their clients to acquire native plants from the Bonnell nursery, and the bulk of their specified plants arrived by train from Eastern nurseries. The botanic gardens and nurseries of the Eastern states had reached a level of sophistication almost comparable to many European countries by the early years of the 20th century. Thus, it is not at all surprising to find that the Olmsted firm often specified the same plants that they used in Eastern gardens.

Their clients often traveled in the East and abroad and were affected by changing fashions in plants. As the Washington Park Arboretum developed, later owners used plants that became available locally. Many gardens possess the inimitable signs of long-past Arboretum sales or access to special collections. Unusual plants, such as the Sierra redwood (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*), pearl bush (*Exochorda racemosa*), chaste plant (*Vitex agnus-castus*), and other plants that one would not normally see, came to Northwest gardens in this way. Members of garden clubs also shared many plants.

Today we have access to an extraordinary array of perennials and other named varieties that were not available to the Olmsted firm. For instance, they had a few interesting lilacs, but now we have many different species and cultivars, including doubles, semi-doubles and far more intensely colorful flowers. The



These photographs of the Thomas Stimson (above) and Hoge homes show the Olmsted Brothers firm's gracious grading of entrance drives and thoughtful early plantings but little emphasis on outdoor spaces for entertainment, much more important in landscape design now than they were 75 years ago.



Olmsteds used only two or three hydrangeas. We probably have 30 different hydrangeas to choose from. The Olmsteds also specified rhododendrons, usually hybrids rather than species. Dawson considered the Loderi hybrids to be remarkable and among the best available. Since his work in the region, some of the best rhododendron hybridizers in the world have lived in Pacific Northwest, and today, we grow a collection of readily available rhododendrons that may be the most remarkable in the world.

The greatly expanded knowledge of garden owners today is also different from the time of the Olmsted firm's practice, when clients were either very knowledgeable and committed gardeners or had no gardening knowledge at all. Now most

garden owners have a greater general knowledge, which has been stimulated by the presence of a successful arboretum, modern garden centers that display and provide information about plants, and new or unusual selections of edible plants and perennials.

Preserving the Olmsted Vision

When all is finally measured, the romantic spatial and visual quality of an Olmsted garden can either be preserved or restored in a way that extends the firm's ideas, or can be applied to new garden designs. In fact, it is now possible to expand the Olmsted use of color and texture owing to the existence of new



Thank You

UNICO PROPERTIES



UNICO



For Extraordinary Support
Of Arbor Vita 2003



This Highlands gate shows the Olmsted Brothers' concern for the scale and elegance of each landscape detail. The forest canopy has changed the scale greatly since the time of this photograph.

plant varieties that allow us much wider color choice as well as far more shade and sun tolerance. In addition, in the Pacific Northwest it is possible to have something in bloom throughout the year, and this winter plant palette, too, can be incorporated into an Olmsted garden.

The rehabilitation, rather than exact restoration, of an Olmsted garden can be achieved by using these new planting ideas. The range of garden uses can also be expanded by selecting garden furniture now available to enhance Olmstedian elements: places to sit and enjoy vistas, secluded openings, and water features. In addition, the array of building materials has been enlarged beyond the Olmsteds' limited palette of stone, brick and wood. We now have pre-cast concretes, unit pavers, and unit block walls, all of which can, with care, be used in Olmstedian gardens.

From the turn of the century and on into the 1930s, when the Olmsted firm was still designing gardens, lighting was relatively unimportant in garden design. There were occasional entry lights associated with gate piers, but otherwise, garden lighting was



**FALL
BULB &
PLANT
SALE**

**SUNDAY
OCTOBER 5
10 AM — 3 PM**
Graham Visitors Center

TULIPS & NARCISSUS
SPECIALTY BULBS
COMPANION PLANTS
POTTERY & MORE



Arboretum Foundation
206.325.4510
www.arboretumfoundation.org



This overview of a formal garden at the Scott Bullitt residence shows an intimate garden designed with plants available in the 1930s. Varieties and sources of ornamental plants have increased immensely since then.

rarely used. Today, we have many available garden lighting options, but the exercise of discretion is most important. There should not be too much lighting in an Olmsted garden, and light fixtures should not be visible unless created of contextually appropriate materials. Great subtlety should be employed in the expansion of the use of garden spaces, such as terraces and covered sitting areas.

In conclusion, the romantic naturalism of an Olmsted garden can, indeed, be retained and enhanced to meet contemporary needs. Olmsted design principles can also be applied to the design of new gardens. To succeed, garden designers must respect the Olmsted Brothers' design approach with its great appreciation for vistas of the outer landscape, with their very distinctive grading manner, and their use of decorative plants to lighten the darkness of the evergreen forest. ∞

TOM BERGER is a landscape architect and member of the Bulletin's Editorial Board. He may be reached at The Berger Partnership, 206-325-6877.

Plant a seed!

Give a membership
as a gift.

Invite a friend
to join the
Arboretum today!



Arboretum Foundation

Call 206-325-4510 for information

CLOUD MOUNTAIN NURSERY

*Create a Landscape to
Complement Your Home*

Specializing in Unique Varieties

- ✿ Japanese Maples ✿ Bamboo
- ✿ Fruit Trees & Berries
- ✿ Unusual Magnolias
- ✿ Northwest Native Plants
- ✿ Extraordinary Conifer Selection
- ✿ Choice Hybrid & Species Rhododendrons

Complete landscape design
and installation
services.

ON THE WEB:

www.cloudmountainfarm.com

CLOUD MOUNTAIN FARM

NURSERY, LANDSCAPING & ORCHARDS

6906 Goodwin Road, Everson • (360) 966-5859

Hours: Wed-Sat 10-5, Sun 11-4

CALL FOR EASY DIRECTIONS

48 page
catalog
available
upon
request



FALL-BLOOM

Aln

Instant

BY MYRNA OUGLAND

We gardeners are a patient people, willing to wait seven years for the first and final flowering of the giant Himalayan lily (*Cardiocrinum giganteum*) or “planting for the future” as we water in a slip of a sorbus, dreaming of the day when robins will feast upon its fruit.

So we can be forgiven if we go looking for a bit of instant garden gratification, and I can think of no better place to start than with fall-blooming crocus and colchicum. Planted in the shortening days of late summer and early fall, they will flower in September and October, perhaps even into November. Native (for the most part) to dryer locales, such as



NG CORMS

ost Stratification

Turkey and the Mediterranean, they do best in full sun and well-drained soil.

The most obvious difference between colchicum and crocus in flower is that a colchicum has six stamens while a crocus has three. Colchicums are assigned to the lily family (Liliaceae) while crocus belong to the Iridaceae or iris family. When handling the bulbs (technically, corms), a colchicum is

usually larger, with a rich brown, smooth, papery jacket and an odd little “foot” extending from the bottom, while a crocus has a rougher, fibrous “tunic” and a flatter base. Colchicum flowers also tend to be bigger than those of

The elegant double-double bloom of *Colchicum* ‘Waterlily’ is “worth every penny of its usually steep price.”

crocus. Most importantly, nobody eats colchicums, since they are poisonous, while mice (and squirrels, and chipmunks, too) have devoured many expensive crocus plantings in my garden.

“Naked Boys”

Fall-blooming colchicums typically send up their flowers before the broad, shiny green leaves, which appear in spring, when the seedpods also form. Because of the flower’s leafless appearance they have been called “Naked Boys,” and because the seed appears in spring (therefore, “before” the flower), they have also been called “Son before the Father.” By whatever name, once you have grown one, you will want to try more.

Colchicum speciosum can begin blooming by the end of August, with the autumn cyclamen (*Cyclamen hederifolium*). Each corm sends up numerous large, lilac-pink flowers, for a long-lasting show. My colchicum season closes near the end of October with the final flowers of ‘Waterlily,’ a double-double lilac that is worth every penny of its usually steep price. The “petals” (technically, perianth segments) on this one are narrow and evenly colored, and multiplied several times the usual six. Between these two colchicums fall a host of others, and each year I search the bulb catalogs and sales to add to the collection.

Colchicum agrippinum blooms in September, with a lovely tessellated pattern over the violet flowers. *C. autumnale* ‘Nancy Lindsay’ is my favorite at the moment, a pure medium lilac without a trace of white. The



The large, pristine blossoms of *Crocus pulchellus* ‘Zephyr’ make this fall-bloomer a treasure. Luckily these corms will be available at the Fall Bulb & Plant Sale.

color almost glows in the September sun.

While *Colchicum autumnale* ‘Nancy Lindsay’ is flowering, the noses of another treasure, *C. autumnale* ‘Alboplenum,’ begin poking through the earth. This double white has narrow “petals” up to two inches long on the outside, shortening toward the center, with an overall impression of glistening white—unless they have been mud-spattered during a rainstorm. The single white *C. autumnale* ‘Album’ is simply elegant, a pure snowy chalice.

Both of these—in fact, any of the fall crocuses or

colchicums—are stunning emerging through the low straps of black mondo grass (*Ophiopogon planiscapus* ‘Nigrescens’). Or, try ‘Waterlily’ through a ground-covering veronica like the variegated *Veronica chamaedrys* ‘Miffy Brute,’ or rich green *V. peduncularis* ‘Georgia Blue.’ *Acaena microphylla* ‘Kupferteppich’ (also know as *A. microphylla* ‘Copper Carpet’) or *A. saccaticupula* ‘Blue Haze,’ or the sprawling *Geranium wallichianum* ‘Buxton’s Blue,’ with mottled green leaves and blue-and-white flowers, are also good partners.

Some gardeners refuse to grow colchicums because of their messy spring foliage. The trick is to place them where the foliage isn’t a nuisance. I have a clump of *C. byzantinum* planted under the sunniest side of a Japanese maple. Blooming in early September, the mass of lilac-pink, white-centered flowers increases in quantity from year to year (this is one of the most floriferous colchicums), and the foliage is a spring bonus, covering the ground between plantings of the late spring-blooming *Allium schubertii*. By the

time the leaves are tatty and yellowed, so much else is happening in the garden that I don't notice them. This is also the time to lift and divide these treasures, spreading them through the garden. As with all bulbs and corms, the foliage must be allowed to yellow and ripen so that the plant gathers strength for its next season.

A Taste of Spring

Of the fall crocuses, delicate yet persistent *Crocus pulchellus* is my favorite. I thought I had lost it when we moved, but it came along in the roots of some geraniums we dug, and a year later was popping up in unexpected places in my new garden. The flowers are a bluish lilac, contrasting with the orange stigmata, especially lovely in the low light of early October, which is when they bloom for me. There is a white form, 'Michael Hoog,' sweet but not as charming as the species. *Crocus pulchellus* 'Zephyr' is advertised as a much larger selection; I need to try that one this fall. The foliage of the fall crocus is no more a problem than that of spring crocus, often not appearing until spring, but fine and grassy, hardly noticed.

My husband is a big fan of saffron, so periodically we try growing our own *Crocus sativus*. The red stigmata separate this species from most others and are a good contrast with the rich lilac flower. For us this crocus dwindles from year to year—our soil is probably too

heavy, and our climate not Mediterranean enough—but we can always find a few to harvest and dry. (Never a significant number: It would take the stigmata of 4,000 *Crocus sativus* to make one ounce of saffron. It's the concept of harvesting our own that counts.) We once tried the selection 'Cashmerianus,' which is supposed to be better adapted to our cool climate, but the mice ate them. I will try again, but this time cage the bulbs in chicken wire first and plant them beneath a ground-cover of creeping or woolly thyme for culinary inspiration.

Crocus speciosus ssp. *speciosus* has purple petals leaning towards the reddish end of the spectrum, rather than blue, with orange stigmata; and it is more reliable, multiplying from year to year. I have also grown the larger-flowered form 'Conqueror' beneath the arching stems of a shrubby cotoneaster—stunning, with flowers as late as the end of October. Try picking just a few and slipping them into a tiny bud-vase for a taste of spring when autumn rain and wind begin.

That's how I like to think of these fall bloomers: not as harbingers of the winter yet to come, but as reminders that spring will follow. What better way to greet one season, and hurry the next? ☞

MYRNA OUGLAND is a member of the Bulletin's Editorial Board. In autumn, her two-acre Kitsap County garden is studded with colchicums and crocuses.

CORMS TO COLLECT

At the Arboretum Foundation Fall Bulb & Plant Sale, a number of the colchicum and crocus selections mentioned in this article will be for sale.

Don't forget to look for them:

- *Colchicum byzantinum*
- *Crocus sativus*
- *Crocus pulchellus* 'Zephyr'
- *Colchicum* 'Waterlily'
- *Crocus speciosus*
- *Crocus speciosus* 'Conqueror'



Marian Raitz (center), Bob Lilly and fellow volunteers, surrounded by hundreds of sacks of bulbs ready for the fall sale.

PAPER SACKS OF **HIDDEN TREASURE**

BY JACKIE HIGHTOWER

“The best selection of narcissi in town is available at the bulb sale October 5 at the Graham Visitors Center,” states Bob Lilly, renowned perennial gardener and Arboretum Fall Bulb & Plant Sale co-chair. The goal is to have as many rare and hard-to-find bulbs as possible! This treasure trove, a good range of all cultivars and the best naturalizers, over 50,000 bulbs total, will be offered Sunday, October 5, between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., along with companion plants and rare fall beauties. Arboretum Foundation members have an early chance to buy bulbs only on Saturday, October 4, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

McBride’s Secret

Unit 41 is the mother of the fall bulb sale. Members Jean Gardiner and Jane Rogers started the sale almost 40 years



ago. But according to Gardiner, the first bulb sale was instigated by Francis McBride, who lived and passionately gardened property that is now part of the beautiful grounds of the Chateau St. Michelle winery.

McBride sought out unusual plants. During a trip to Europe she saw cyclamen for the first time and wanted to grow them here. Not wanting to chance customs agents thwarting her, she tucked a few corms in



her bra and arrived home with her secret. The corms were planted in a ring around a tree in her garden, still visible on the winery property. Their luxuriant growth and her generous nature soon had many in cultivation among members of Unit 41.

When McBride eventually tired of her role, she asked a young and energetic new member of Unit 41 if she would please take over the cyclamen and organize something to make more bulbs available.

Jean and her husband Art Gardiner rose to the challenge, enlisting Jane Rogers and many others. Their first sale raised \$200; today's sales net about \$17,000.

Years later, current bulb sale chair Darcy Halloran, then a young Unit 41

As Myrna Ougland notes in her article in this issue, the lilac-pink, white-centered *Colchicum byzantinum* is "one of the most floriferous" colchicums.

member, remembers taking her toddler son over to Jean Gardiner's patio to help pot up bulbs. In those early years, "dry" and "wet" (potted) bulbs were sold. If you bought a potted bulb and for some reason it didn't grow, at least you had purchased a pot full of Art Gardiner's rich, hand-sieved compost!

The Bulb Sale Today

The sale has changed over the years, and now Arboretum volunteers order and package for sale over 50,000 bulbs—all dry bulbs in paper bags ready to be planted. This year, on Sunday, October 5, 10 or 12 vendors will also sell companion plants, and The Greenery will sell "wet" bulbs, such as trilliums and erythroniums, known for dying if not kept in moist soil. Also on Sunday, the Pat Calvert Greenhouse and Plant Donations Center will sell additional autumn gems.

What has not changed is the effort to keep the bulbs cool and in good condition before they are sold. Volunteers sort large batches of bulbs into small paper bags of five to 10 bulbs each. Paper, rather than plastic, bags give the bulbs better air circulation, helping to keep them viable until planting.

The bulb sale has always been an "early bird gets the worm" event, and sometimes, precious selections were sold out early in the day; but volunteers' use of a new database and careful noting of choices that quickly sold out has resulted in the ordering of more particularly desirable bulbs. The goal is to sell all available bulbs in one day. The few, leftover bulbs are sold by the Arboretum gift shop.

They Make It Happen

Sale chair Darcy Halloran and co-chair Bob Lilly are ably assisted by a team of three



Thank You



CONTINENTAL MILLS
FOOD PRODUCTS OF CHOICE



For Extraordinary Support
Of Arbor Vita 2003



Arboretum Shop
Washington Park Arboretum

*Holiday gifts
for the
garden lover*

Open daily, 10 AM—4 PM

Graham Visitors Center

Arboretum Foundation

2300 Arboretum Drive East

specialists: Sally Abella—narcissus, Diana Ryesky—tulips, and Helen Santibanez—specialty bulbs. But this team of five is only the tip of the iceberg, for it takes more than 200 volunteers to make this event successful. Many report for packaging duty when large orders are divided into small retail bags. “A great activity for those of us who can no longer count above five!” laughs Lilly.

Additional volunteer jobs are varied: traffic sign installation, lots of sale day opportunities, cashiering, and the always-necessary fortification of workers with food and drink. “We have a ball and get to know great plants,” says Santibanez, a new fan of *Eremurus*. Newcomers are urged to call the Arboretum Foundation and find out when to come to volunteer. Five days of good-natured activity keep volunteers visiting and learning, and only one shift qualifies a worker for the volunteers’ pre-sale Saturday afternoon.

But coming back on Sunday is essential, for vendors often bring plants unavailable in regular retail locations. Vendors this year include Botanica, Briggs Nursery, Colvos Creek Nursery, Cultus Bay Nursery, Fancy Fronds, Heath and Heathers, Lee Farm & Nursery, Naylor Creek Nursery, Puget Garden Resources, Sundquist Nursery, The Greenery, and Wind Poppy Farm & Nursery.

Whether you, too, are interested in the newest narcissus, some elegant *eremurus* or a whole patch of *Cyclamen coum*, the bulb sale is for you. Be part of the tradition. Hope to see you there! ∞

Jackie Hightower, who finds planting “just a few” bulbs irresistible, is a long-time Arboretum Foundation member and volunteer. In addition, she runs Environmental & Water Resources Planning and does garden design for habitat restoration: 206-999-9352.



WELLS MEDINA N U R S E R Y

Where Gardeners Grow

5 Acres of Superior Quality Plants

Perennials • Annuals • Shrubs • Roses
Rhododendrons • Japanese Maples

Reference Library • Knowledgeable Staff • Display Gardens
Demonstration Containers

425.454.1853

8300 NE 24th Street • Just off 520 in Medina, WA



The luscious fruit and large, elegant leaves of *Ficus carica* make this stunning shrub or small tree an asset to any “edible landscape.”

Growing Figs (*Ficus carica*) In the Pacific Northwest

BY HILDEGARD R. HENDRICKSON

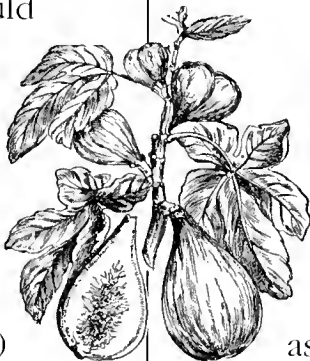
*H*ave you ever tried a fresh fig? The fig is the oldest known fruit. Archaeologists have found traces of cultivated figs up to 6,000 years old. Figs are mentioned in the Bible over 50 times. Greek athletes ate lots of figs because they believed figs would make them run faster.

A sweet and delicious gourmet's delight, figs are not really a fruit in the botanical sense. They are flowers, borne on the inside of a balloon-like stem and accessible to the outside world only through a hole (the "eye") at the base. They are a flower turned inside out. To fully enjoy fresh figs you must grow your own, as they don't ship well. I prefer to eat my figs fresh, but they can also be dried and cooked into sauces and jams.

Many people think figs grow only in warmer climates. In the Pacific Northwest, the key to success with figs is choosing the right varieties and, for best fruit production, choosing a site with maximum sun exposure. To make a fig tree happy, plant it on the south side of a building where it gets the benefit of heat reflection.

A number of fig varieties are dependable in our region, including *Ficus carica* 'Desert King,' a large yellowish-green fig with pink flesh; *F. carica* 'Lattarulla' (also known as the Italian Honey Fig), which is large with greenish-yellow skin and amber flesh. *Ficus carica* 'Brown Turkey' is also large with mahogany-colored skin and light amber flesh. Other varieties offered by local nurseries include 'Neveralla,' with shiny, yellow-green

skin and amber flesh, and 'Violette de Bordeaux' (also known as 'Bordeaux' or 'Negronne'), which annually produces two crops of purplish-black figs with pink flesh.



Growing Figs Successfully

With their large, dark green leaves, spreading habit and gnarled branching patterns, figs are wonderful ornamentals as well as fruiting plants that fit well in an "edible landscape." They can be trained to grow as a bush or as a tree that can reach 25 feet. Root restriction is often necessary to prevent the tree from becoming too large and vigorous at the expense of fruitfulness. (When a relative's fig tree became too tall and gangly, she cut it down to four feet from the ground. Now the tree is once again growing vigorously and bearing more heavily than before.)

It is also possible for condo owners and apartment dwellers to grow this delicious fruit. With proper pruning, a fig can be grown as a bush in a large container on a sunny balcony or porch. The size of the container will influence the eventual size of the plant. Figs also may be espaliered on a trellis. Originally, I grew my four fig trees in containers, moving them into the greenhouse in the winter and back out into the garden in the spring. Now they grow in the garden year 'round.

Figs are easy to grow, and their life expectancy is over 100 years. They can be rooted from cuttings and will bear fruit in two to four years. Mature fig trees will tolerate temperatures to 10 degrees Fahrenheit. When



we get an unexpected Arctic blast in the Pacific Northwest, young, tender fig plants will freeze to the ground but will re-sprout from their roots in spring. I have read an article about figs being grown in Minnesota. In fall, they are “bent” down to the ground and covered to prevent them from freezing to death during Minnesota’s cold winters.

For best fruit production choose a site with maximum sun exposure, at least eight hours a day. Figs need good drainage but will grow in sandy to heavy clay soil with a neutral pH. Figs need very little all-purpose fertilizer (6-6-6) but should be given some lime every year to maintain neutral pH. Regular watering during spring and in dry summers will result in consistent growth and good fruit crops. If shoot growth averages less than 6 inches a year, nitrogen fertilizer should be applied in the winter months at a rate of one pound per tree per year. A fig grown in a container will need diligent feeding and watering, for nutrients leach quickly from containers.

In general, figs are trouble free and have no pests or diseases of importance, but if your plants occasionally have dead twigs covered in pink pustules, cut the diseased twigs back to healthy buds.

The Fruitful Result

Since most homegrown fig varieties are self-pollinating, you need to grow only one plant. No fruit thinning is necessary. Some fig varieties bear two crops per year. (In the tropics, figs can bear three crops.) The figs that are successfully harvested in the summer (the “breba” crop) have developed at the apex of the previous summer’s shoots and extend back 6 to 12 inches from the tip. They are carried over the winter as embryo fruits about the size of peas. Provided the embryo figs are not destroyed by cold, they develop in the following spring to ripen in the summer. In the Pacific Northwest, the second crop is produced on the growth made in the current



Thank You

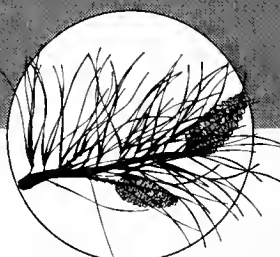
Four Seasons Olympic Hotel



For Extraordinary Support
Of Arbor Vita 2003



Arboretum Foundation



Chip Kennaugh Co.
Arboricultural Services

425-376-0106
Fax: 425-558-4145
6401 152nd NE
Redmond, WA 98052
E-Mail ChipKennaugh@earthlink.net

Steamboat Island Nursery
uncommon trees, shrubs, vines,
perennials, grasses, annuals
and temperennials
also pnw native plants



8424 Steamboat Island Road
Olympia, Washington
360-866-2516
e-mail: steamboat@olywa.net
Open Sat & Sun 10-5 through October
Winter Hours by Appointment

season. It will only ripen when we have a long, warm autumn. If the second crop does not ripen, the figs should be removed, helping to divert the energies of the plant into developing next summer's breba figs.

Figs must ripen on the tree before picking. They are ripe when they are very soft to the touch, wilted at the neck and bent down on the stem from their own weight. Be patient and wait until they are soft, for figs don't ripen further after they have been picked. Slight splits in the skin and sometimes a drop of nectar exuding from the eye are signs that the fig is ready. Picked carefully and kept cool (but not refrigerated), figs will keep for two to three weeks. But they are best eaten fresh.

Using a toothpick, French fig growers near Paris "hasten the ripening of the figs" by applying one or two drops of olive oil to the eye at the bottom after figs size up, about four or five weeks before they would normally ripen. This procedure causes figs to ripen more quickly. Although it sounds like super-

stition, Ray Givan (see bibliography) tried it and found it worked. I plan to try this year.

I hope you will consider growing figs in your Northwest garden. Plump, ripe figs picked from your own trees or bushes are a special treat. ∞

HILDEGARD HENDRICKSON is a member of the Seattle Tree Fruit Society. Her article, *Growing Kiwis In the Pacific Northwest*, appeared in the Fall, 2002, issue of the Bulletin.

Bibliography

Born, Fred W. & Raymond U. Givan. "The Fig Booklet." 1996. (The authors are the fig resource persons for North American Fruit Explorers, NAFEX, and can be contacted at raygivan@earthlink.net.)

Readman, Joanna. "Fruity Stories." Boxtree Limited, London, England, 1996. (All about growing, storing and eating fruit.)

Stebbins, Robert L. & Lance Walheim. "Western Fruit, Berries & Nuts, How to Select, Grow and Enjoy." H.P. Books, Tucson, Arizona.



Plant Combinations *continued from page 3*

never watered, and whatever summer and autumn bloom we could find must happily appear without the encouragement of summer irrigation.

Over the years, the rock garden has become more interesting during the summer, thanks to the repeat bloom of fragrant *Daphne x transatlantica* 'Jim's Pride,' the bright blue, tradescantia-like blossoms of *Commelina dianthifolia*, low-growing eryngiums, ornamental oreganos, and the foliage of several *Hebe* species. But autumn color proved more elusive.

Inspiring Travel

Planting quandaries are often solved by visits to other gardens. A September, 1998, trip to gardens of southwestern England provided plenty of inspiration, for it was there that I saw reputedly tender Chinese plumbago (*Ceratostigma willmottianum*) growing into yard-tall shrubs with rich blue flowers. Having already found the slightly smaller and equally tender *Ceratostigma griffithii* hardy on a dry-as-a-bone, sunny corner in my garden, I was determined to try *C. willmottianum*. I found it listed in the Aiken, South Carolina, Woodlanders nursery catalog and received a splendid specimen to plant in the rock garden. Happily, it lived through the winter.

In the summer of 1999, a trip to California fortunately included a visit to Digging Dog Nursery in Albion, near Mendocino. It was there—on that warm, sunny, dry site that it occurred to me to try growing California fuchsia, *Epilobium canum* (also known as *Zauschneria californica*) and *Crocoshmia* 'Citronella' (also known as *C.* 'Golden Fleece') with the plumbago. Surely, if they survived, there could be nothing more colorful the combination of their red, yellow and blue flowers!

Epilobium canum is a native of California, as its specific epithet indicates. Clump-forming and a bit woody at the base, it spreads by rhizomes but not aggressively in my dry rock garden. Its gray, lance-shaped foliage and many scarlet flowers attract attention over a long period of time. It is hardy in zones 8-10. A bit hardier (zones 6-9), *Crocoshmia* 'Citronella' is a cormous perennial that grows to about 2 feet in my garden and has long-blooming stalks of lemon-yellow flowers.

A Contented Consortium

Plants brought home in the summer of '99 bloomed with the Chinese plumbago that August, as they have bloomed each year since. In fact, *C. willmottianum* is so content that it has set seed. All three plants are attractive to hummingbirds, so visitors who sit quietly on the patio are often rewarded by a whirr of wings.

Beginning to bloom in early August, all three plants continue blossoming throughout September, even into early October, without any attention from the gardener. In late October, when autumn light softens the texture of both rock and foliage, they still hold their own, bright against the background of darker conifers. Gray *Epilobium* foliage looks good throughout the fall, while plumbago leaves gradually show tints of red.

In winter, the *Crocoshmia* and *Epilobium* stalks are trimmed back; dead twigs are pruned from the *Ceratostigma* after danger of frost in spring. An easy-to-manage trinity, these heat-loving, drought-tolerant plants may be even more helpful if our Northwest climate continues to warm. Whether or not that weather trend continues, they form an excellent autumn combination to enjoy right now. ♪

LEE NEFF edits this Bulletin. Occasionally, she shares stories about her garden in other regional publications.

HORT 101

Test your horticultural vocabulary with these terms used in this issue!

BULB, (bulb) noun

A bulb—for instance, of an onion or a tulip—is a swollen, compressed shoot, usually underground, stem with fleshy, colorless, scale-like leaf bases attached to a small, disk-shaped stem. The outside, brown leaf layer protects the central bud and immature foliage leaves that eventually emerge from the bulb as well as the fleshy, food-storage leaves that feed the bud and foliage until photosynthesis begins. **BULBOUS** (bul' bəs) adjective.

CORM, (kôrm) noun

Corms are similar to bulbs in external appearance but not in bulbs' internal, layered structure. Corms, such as those of crocuses and colchicums, are short, swollen underground stems surrounded by the dry, scaly leaf bases of the previous year's growth. **CORMOUS** (kôr' məs) adjective.

GARDENESQUE, adjective

A term coined by John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) to describe the individual display of vast numbers of newly available shrubs and trees on elegant, green lawns. Loudon's "Encyclopedia of Gardening" (1822) was the most comprehensive ever published; his "Suburban Gardens" (1838) and "Suburban Horticulturist" (1842) brought his gardenesque style to the attention of American gardeners and designers.

GERTRUDE JEKYLL (jē' kəl) (1843-1932)

A successful English artist and designer who turned to gardening and writing when her eyesight began to fail. Through her garden designs and books, such as

"Wood and Garden" (1899) and "Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden" (1908) she became an important influence on English and American gardening. **JEKYLLSQUE, adjective.**

PERIANTH, (per' ē anth') noun

All of the petals (the corolla, usually the conspicuously colored flower part) and the sepals (the calyx, the flower part, often green, that usually encloses and protects the petals) make up the perianth of the flower.

PICTURESQUE, adjective

A style of garden design created toward the end of the 19th Century that offered variety and surprise and appealed to the Romantic sensibility found in the stormy skies and rocky slopes of the Romantic Italian painter Salvator Rosa. The forests and contours, light and shadow, of Olmsted Brothers' landscapes often reflected Picturesque design principles.

SPECIFIC EPITHET, (ep' ə thet') noun

The second part of a species' scientific, binomial name that in some way characterizes the species. For instance, the specific epithet of the species *Ceratostigma willmottianum* refers to Ellen Willmott (1860-1934), one of the sponsors of E. H. Wilson's travel in China. Wilson introduced *Ceratostigma willmottianum* in 1908.

STIGMATA, (stig' mətə, stig mǎ' tə) noun

Stigma, the part of the pistil (the female part of the flower) that receives the pollen.

Ahhh, Time to Read

BY BRIAN THOMPSON

“*Back To Basics*” is a common theme amongst several recent publications by Pacific Northwest authors, who perhaps recognize the needs of the growing number of new gardeners to learn the basics of plant culture and garden design as defined by the subtleties of our region.

Each author, however, takes an individual approach to conveying this information, and as they all speak from long experience, nuggets of good advice are waiting to be found by novice and pro alike. So keep an eye out for these titles at the Arboretum Shop; or visit the Elisabeth C. Miller Library to read more about Gardening 101, PNW style.

New Titles by Familiar Names

Sunset Publishing, with its *Western Garden Book* and many special topic handbooks, has provided a cornucopia of advice for gardeners throughout the west since the 1930s. For the first time, Sunset has published a book with an exclusive Northwest focus. Rather than a



regional redux of the encyclopedic entries of the *WGB*, “*Gardening in the Northwest*” uses the initial essay section of the older publication as a model. The solid facts and figures that established *Sunset’s* reputation are here, too, just less dominant.

This lyrical, big picture approach—and the photos are what grab you—stretches the reader’s concepts of garden design and plant selection. Part of this approach reflects the widely defined scope of “Northwest”—everything from shore to mountain and from Alaska to Inland Empire—but it also demonstrates what’s possible

in a large and passionate gardening community. And perhaps most fun of all is getting to meet many of the Northwest’s horticultural “stars” in brief but candid bios.

Speaking of “stars,” even non-gardeners in the Seattle area are likely to be familiar with Ed Hume. He has presented his homespun advice through newspapers, radio, television, and in person since the 1960s, but it has been 20 years since his last book. With “*Gardening with Ed Hume: Northwest Gardening Made*

Easy," he aims to share all his "easiest and most effective methods" for making gardening an enjoyable pastime for a wide audience.


The result is a handbook-style collection of stand-alone fact sheets on a whole gamut of topics that seem particularly addressed to the beginning, and perhaps slightly intimidated, gardener. Most useful are the personal favorites and short anecdotes sprinkled liberally through the lists for plant selection, tips for approaching common garden chores, and assurances that it's really not that hard to have a green thumb.

First Books from Gardening Columnists

Mary Palmer, another Seattle media name from some years back, writes with a similar voice of long experience in her first book on gardening, "ABCs of West Coast Gardening." This also is a good choice for the beginner and reads like a kindly, experienced neighbor leaning over the fence with advice and stories, many from Palmer's farming days on Jedediah Island in the Strait of Georgia.

These stories, lurking between the pages of straightforward suggestions for selecting the best broccoli varieties or planting a tree, often include a more philosophical message about the garden's place in the big picture. She leads off with how she and her husband were once inundated with crows eating their crops. A friend recommended putting out a bowl of Scotch, which, as predicted, produced a field of inebriated, inert corvids (including one raven). But rather than administer the coup de grâce, Palmer realized that while "it is good to enjoy a garden's bounty, it is even better to enjoy gardening itself" and was delighted to watch the antics of the birds regaining their senses.

A more recent celebrity amongst local garden writers is Marty Wingate, whose "Big Ideas for Northwest Small Gardens" approaches many of the same fundamentals



Enhance
your home
and garden
with natural stone

BLUESTONE
FLAGSTONE
WALL STONE
STONE BENCHES
COBBLE STONE

Lakeview Stone & Garden

Open Monday through Saturday
In Seattle, behind University Village

4647 UNION BAY PLACE NE (206) 525-5270
Delivery available



Edgewood Flower Farm
2017 Meridian Ave East, Edgewood, WA
(No. Hill Puyallup) (253) 927-0817



Herron Gardens
Distictive Northwest Design
Ann Herron
(425)454-1216

from a distinctly urban point of view. Drawing on not only her own experience, but also that of the many owners of small gardens she interviewed—some contacted right off the street, she interweaves her own distinct voice through photographs (excellent, by Jacqueline Koch), highlight points and sidebars that somehow are practical, fun and cajoling all at the same time.

For example, when she addresses the problem of noise, she expresses what many of us have felt when she writes, “it would be wonderful if there were a particular plant (named, perhaps, *Decibelia loweratus*) that would absorb all noise coming from without;” she goes on to explain that visually blocking the source of the noise lowers its perception, and that more can be done to mask sounds with other sounds, such as rustling bamboo or bubbling water. While there is much here for the beginner, this book probably offers even more to the somewhat sophisticated gardener who is trying create a very personal space amongst the realities of urban neighborhood constraints.

From our Friends in British Columbia

Lone Pine Publishing, with offices in Auburn, Washington, and Edmonton, Alberta, has published in recent years a number of

regional, user-friendly guidebooks to native flora and fauna as well as plants for the garden. The newest title in the latter category is “Roses for Washington and Oregon” by Brad Jalbert and Laura Peters. The rosarian here is Jalbert, who owns Select Roses nursery and greenhouse in South Langley, British Columbia, and contributes not only a regional perspective to variety selection but also a thoughtful and environmentally sensitive array of solutions for the various disease and insect problems one may encounter in a bed of roses.

The writing is crisp but makes clear the pluses and minuses of each highlighted selection. “The Fairy doesn’t just tolerate neglect, it prefers it.” or “Sandalwood needs optimal conditions to be successful but it is well worth the fuss.” Like all Lone Pine editions, this book has a highly weather- and wear-resistant cover and small size format, making it a great choice for taking to the nursery when seeking to expand one’s rose collection.

A very different book from any of those above is “In Veronica’s Garden” by Margaret Cadwaladr. A biography of Veronica Milner (1909-1998), the subject’s gardens at Qualicum Beach on Vancouver Island and in Ireland take a back seat to the story of their creator; but the book still includes a fascinating glimpse of gardening on an aristocratic scale few of us will ever know.



Northwest Flower & Garden Show - Winner of the People's Choice Award

*An enticing selection of
common and uncommon plants*

8000 Roses • Rare Perennials • New Annuals • Unique Garden Gifts

CHRISTIANSON'S
Nursery & Greenhouse

15806 Best Rd • Mount Vernon

360-466-3821

www.christiansonsnursery.com Open Daily 9-6



But many of us can relate to her opinions about gardens, such as "This is not to be a garden of carefully mowed, weedless lawns. Buttercups bob in the grass. Masses of forget-me-nots shine periwinkle blue. Weeds, birds and specimen trees live in symphony." We can also understand her strong desire that her gardens be preserved, which fortunately for us all has become reality as the Milner Gardens and Woodlands are now open to the public (see www.milnergardens.org for details).

Ahhh, Time to Read

Late fall and winter give all gardeners a chance to reflect on the past and plan for the future. This bounty of books will give you, or one you hold dear, much to enrich these musings. ☺

BRIAN THOMPSON is a librarian at the Elisabeth C. Miller Horticultural Library.

Bibliography

"Gardening in the Northwest." By the editors of Sunset Magazine and Sunset Books. Menlo Park, CA: Sunset Books, 2003. ISBN: 0376035285, \$19.95.

Hume, Ed. "Gardening with Ed Hume: Northwest Gardening Made Easy." Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 2003. ISBN: 1570613281, \$24.95.

Palmer, Mary. "ABCs of West Coast Gardening." Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2002. ISBN: 1550172530, \$24.95.

Wingate, Marty. "Big Ideas for Northwest Small Gardens." Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 2003. ISBN: 1570612757, \$21.95.

Jalbert, Brad and Laura Peters. "Roses for Washington and Oregon." Edmonton: Lone Pine Publishing, 2003. ISBN: 1551052652, \$18.95.

Cadwaladr, Margaret. "In Veronica's Garden." Qualicum, BC: Madrona Books & Publishing, 2002. ISBN: 0973009608, \$23.00.

MARK HARMAN
4000 SW Myrtle Street
Seattle, WA 98136
937-7428
Fax 937-4939

Certified Arborist

**STONEHEDGE
TREE EXPERTS, INC.**



A Total Tree Service with Quality Workmanship
www.stonehedgegetree.com



**THE BERGER
PARTNERSHIP, P.S.**

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
SITE PLANNING**

2021 Minor East
Seattle, WA 98102
(206) 325-6877

www.bergerpartnership.com



Thank You

**Kevin Bradford
Design**



**For Extraordinary Support
Of Arbor Vita 2003**





Photo by Al Dodson

Molbak's®

Everything gardening.

- Unique and Diverse Selection of Trees, Shrubs, Perennials and Annuals
- Artistically Designed Container Gardens
- Free Seminars and Special Events
- Custom Orders
- Knowledgeable, Friendly Staff
- Customer Satisfaction Guaranteed

Experts in Horticulture
Since 1956

Woodinville • 13625 NE 175th Street • www.molbaks.com • 425-483-5000 • 1-866-466-5225



Arboretum Foundation

Washington Park Arboretum

2300 Arboretum Drive East

Seattle WA 98112-2300

www.arboretumfoundation.org

**An arboretum is a living museum
of woody plants for research,
education, conservation and display.**

NONPROFIT ORG.

US POSTAGE

PAID

SEATTLE, WA

PERMIT NO. 126

Susan and Allen Rosenberg
1015 37th Ave E
Seattle WA 98112-4329