

August 14, 1998

There are a large number of people who take some interest in their gardens and want them to look nice—but that isn't committed gardening, it's extended housekeeping.....For a garden to live it needs a long-term commitment from the individual. A garden is a continuum. It doesn't exist at one instant but in the past, present, and future. Unless it does, it isn't a garden—it's a change of scene.

John Percival, *Gardens Illustrated*, Aug/Sept. 1998

An Alternative Philosophy of Gardening

A garden is perhaps all things to all men, and I suspect each generation produces views from which future generations will draw what they will. The late twentieth-century has been dominated by environmental awareness, whilst those who work in a technological society face ever-increasing pressures and greater job insecurity. To some of us our gardens are both our refuge and our therapy and it is perhaps not surprising that the strictures of formal gardening seem both environmentally unattractive and mentally constrictive.

Not that this means that they have to be unattractive—indeed, beauty is perhaps the most important part of the joy which we find in them. Watching nature's interplay of charm and change is both fascinating and humbling. How often do chance combinations yield the greatest delights? Learning from nature's examples and following one's own instincts within the nature of the land at our disposal must eventually lead to a highly individual garden which is primarily pleasing to its maker. Being true to one's creative self rarely produces a boring garden and whether a stranger likes the garden should be a matter of supreme irrelevance—this is your garden, after all.

The constant change within the garden provides us with perhaps the gentlest and most spiritually gratifying lesson: that we are merely sojourners on the planet. The processes of birth, life in all its variety, and death are played out before us in the seasons of the years, and the impermanence of our plans. Let us place the plants which we love and admire within the patches of earth of which we are custodians; let us admire the juxtaposition of one miraculously beautiful plant against another but let this be a process which feeds the inner man, rather than one which imposes moralistic straight jackets.

Perhaps the only injunction which the gardener should bear in mind is respect for all species, however humble. Man may have been given dominion over the earth but

power imposes a level of responsibility upon those who wield it.

The concept of gardening as a process whereby man conquers nature is something of an antiquated bad joke in the face of the environmental disasters wrought by man's technological 'genius'. Anyone who still subscribes to this idea should read James Lovelock's *Gaia* or Jonathan Pottit's *Where on Earth Are We Going*.

I admire beautiful gardens, especially those whose designer's hand is so subtly applied that one momentarily forgets that it is the product of design. But the most beautiful garden I have ever seen was a natural Eden, half-way up a track to Doshong La in southeast Tibet. In this remote part of the world, where the hostile weather conditions deter the regular attention of man, the pony-cropped meadows were flanked by primulas and irises against rhododendrons, pines, prunus, birch, and wild euonymous. The glacial river snaked its way through the clearing, leaving the ground just boggy enough to grow wild orchids. No wonder the Buddhists call this area one of the four Earthly Paradises. But, as we know, paradise is ever-doomed and the logging gangs have moved even into this awe-inspiring place.

In our public gardens perhaps more discipline and consideration has to be given to the notions of public taste and of gardening as an 'art form'. But the private gardener, who gardens for pleasure, can surely do what is most gratifying to his own personal taste—anything else would be merely mimicry and ultimately unsatisfying. So let us treasure our plots with joy, gratitude and humility in the face of the wonders of creation.

Bernadette Hunt Adams—*Gardens with nature on a fellside in Cumbria, England (The Hardy Plant, the Journal of the Hardy Plant Society UK, Vol 20, No. 1, Spring, 1998—used with permission)*

COMING EVENTS

August 19, 1998, 6 PM. *Pot luck supper at Olbrich Gardens*, in the commons. Bring a dish to pass plus utensils. Coffee and juice will be provided. At the October, 1997 business meeting, the WHPS voted to donate \$2000 towards the purchase of plants for the new perennial garden. Come see the results! As a bonus event, the Botanical Art Society will present a slide show entitled *Botanical Art—A Continuing Tradition* as background for their first exhibition at Olbrich entitled "Prairie to Woodland to Garden—Celebrating the Tradition of Botanical Art."

September 12, 1998, 9 AM. Second annual *Great Perennial Divide* for members only. In the garden of Joan Severa (she doesn't know it yet). Details to be announced.

September 16, 1998. 7 PM, Olbrich Gardens. Dane Country's own Olive Thompson will speak on *Primroses for Wisconsin Gardens*.

October 10, 1998 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. *Gardening with Bulbs*. Olbrich Gardens. A one day symposium with four national speakers. There will be a \$45 fee to attend this event. Featured Speakers: Brent Heath, Mike Heger, Galen Gates and Scott Kunst. Details will be mailed separately.

October 21, 1998. 7 PM Olbrich Gardens. Upstairs Meeting Room. *Annual business meeting*. A slide show on highlights of the gardener's year will also take place.

October 25, 1998. 1-4 PM Upstairs meeting room Olbrich Gardens. *Members seed exchange and workshop*.

November 18, 1998. 7 PM Olbrich Gardens. Upstairs Meeting Room *The Garden Bench—It's History and Use in Garden Design*. Martha Glowacki and Mary Dickey.

December 9, 1998. 7 PM Olbrich Gardens, Commons. *Fun with Flowers and Film*. Jerry Gerloff, leader of Madison's nature photography club. Come learn about photographing your garden and view Jerry's artistry with flowers on film.

January 17, 1999. 11AM-2PM Annual potluck brunch with the Hosta Society at Olbrich Gardens. John Cannon and John Frisch will present a slide and music show based on the WHPS summer trip to the glorious gardens of England. Pam Duthie (Chicago Botanical Garden) will speak on *What Midwesterners Can Learn from the Gardens of England*.

February 17, 1999. 7 PM Olbrich Gardens. Tony Avent, Plant Delights Nursery, will speak on *The World of Hosta*, sponsored by the WHPS and the Wisconsin Hosta Society.

March 17, 1999. Olbrich Gardens, 7 PM, Commons. David Cavagnaro, nature/garden photographer from Decorah, Iowa, will speak on *Creating a Kitchen Garden*. David was formerly with the Antique Seed Savers Exchange and has a knock out kitchen garden which we will be visiting in July, 1999. His photographic work has been featured in all major gardening magazines.

April 21, 1999. Olbrich Gardens, 7 PM, Commons. Kris Bachtel, Morton Arboretum. *Searching for Plants in China Hardy to the Upper Midwest*. Kris will enlighten us on new plants from far off places for Wisconsin gardens.

Other Events/Items of Note

August 20, 1998, 3-7PM. *Horticultural Field Day at the UW College of Agricultural Research Station* at 8502 Mineral Point Road (West Beltline). Check out 400 unique flowers and vegetable growing in the gardens.

If any WHPS members wish to donate plants to Taliesin in addition to those donated to the annual plant sale, please call Frances Nemtin at 608-588-2511.

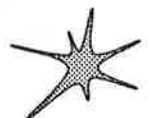
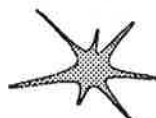
Events to Dream About

November 6, 1999 Olbrich Gardens. An all day symposium on *Great Shady Gardeners*. We have John Mickel (author of the new book *Ferns for American Gardens*), New York Botanical Garden, signed up as a speaker, as well as Darrell Probst on tricyrtis and epimediums.

November, 2000. Olbrich Gardens. *Gardening from the Catalog*—Dan Hinckley, Heronwoods Nursery, Tony Avent, Plant Delights Nursery (committed), Roy Klehm, Klehm Nursery, and maybe one more.



Basically, I belong to the Jackson Pollack school of gardening. Instead of flinging paint at a canvas, I fling seeds at the ground, hoping for divine intervention between them leaving my hand and reaching the soil.



Brian Patten,
Gardens Illustrated, Aug/Sept 1998

Seed Exchange

By Ruth Cadoret

Our society's first seed exchange and workshop will be held October 25th at Olbrich Gardens, from 1-4 PM. If you have not begun collecting now is a good time to start, as lots of seeds are beginning to mature. If seed collecting is new to you, here are a few basics to get you started.

First, a seed must be mature in order to be viable. In general, the fruiting structure, whether pod, capsule, seed head, or berry, will expand and change color, becoming dark as the seed ripens. The seed, too, will darken and become hard enough so that it cannot be squashed between your fingers. If the seeds are blowing away or falling on the ground you can be certain that they are ripe.

Second, a seed must be captured before it is dispersed. Some seeds are easy to collect. Primulas, poppies, and digitalis form pods that open at the top when the seeds are ripe. All you have to do is tip it over into your collecting container and let the seeds spill out. The milk weed pod splits open just a bit, advertising the ripe seeds, well before the wind takes them away. A bit trickier are seeds that mature at different times on the same stalk. When the first seeds become ripe, the whole stalk can be cut and placed in a roomy paper bag. In a few weeks, most of the immature seeds will be ripened. Trickier yet are the plants whose pods explode or the seeds are blown away suddenly. By tracking the seed's progress, one can pluck the pod (or umbel, etc.) when the seed is close to maturity. It can be left to ripen in the bag. Close the bag of violet, geranium, and ruellia seeds or they will scatter across the living room floor when they pop open.

By now it is obvious that seed collecting provides us with yet another excuse to go into the garden since it is necessary to regularly observe the plants from which we hope to collect. Don't be shy about it. Break a seed pod open and look inside. It's the only way to learn how the external changes reflect the seed's progress inside.

Once the seeds are collected they should be left to dry. Seeds of most spring ephemerals, woodland species, and some trees need either moist storage conditions, or be planted immediately upon maturity. Seeds that need dry storage are easier and will make up most of the seeds at our exchange. Let the seeds air dry in a roomy paper bag, spread out on a newspaper, or on labeled paper plates for a few weeks. After drying, the seeds need to be cleaned. "Cleaning" refers to separating the seed from all other plant material collected with it. There are many reasons to do this. It helps remove seed damaging

insects and fungi, reduces that volume of material that needs to be stored, and makes it possible to scatter the seed evenly when sowing. It also helps keep the seeds dry as the chaff tends to absorb water.

Begin the cleaning process by separating the seed from its pod or cluster by shaking or crumbling it in your hand, rubbing it over a coarse surface, or crushing it with a rolling pin (anything that works). Then shake the resulting mess through sieves and screens of various sizes held over a collecting box. Sometimes the seed will fall through with the chaff on top. Sometimes the reverse will happen. When you have a mix of seed and chaff that cannot be separated by size, place it in a shallow box. Blow gently at the seed and the chaff should blow off since it is lighter. Another approach is to place all the material at one end of the box, raise that end a bit past horizontal, and gently shake the box to encourage the material to move downward. Blow gently at it while shaking. The seed should go to the bottom and the chaff to the top.

After cleaning the seed, store it in a way that will preserve its viability. Although each species has its own optimum moisture level and temperature, in general, viability is preserved best in colder, dryer conditions. Ways to achieve this are as numerous as the authors I've read on the subject. Its easiest to put the clean seed in a paper envelope. Keep them in a covered glass jar with some silica gel in a cool dry room or in the refrigerator.

Seed doesn't need to be cleaned for our local exchange, but its a good skill to acquire as the national and international exchanges insist on clean seed. You will see cleaning demonstrations at the exchange and we will help you clean your seed.

What seeds are best to collect? Those of an unimproved species will come true. Named varieties and hybrids will not by and large. Collect seed from plants you want lots of, or that you don't want to divide.

References (Detailed information on specific plants)

1. *Growing and Propagating Wild Flowers*, Harry R. Phillips, Univ North Carolina Press, 1985.
2. *Collecting, Processing and Germinating Seeds of Wildland Plants*. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon. James A. Lorenz and Cheryl G. Young, 1986



Horty Times with Max and Frankie—or Touring The Gardens of Southern England with the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society

June 22: Departure—The Guru of All Things Green

The long-awaited trip began auspiciously. There were flight delays at Boston's Logan Airport due to fog and the gate desk in Milwaukee just listed the flight as "DE-LAYED." While explaining my plight to the attendant, a woman standing next to me said in a lovely British accent, "Why, you must be the Guru of All Things Green from Madison!" Now compared to my rather scruffy fellow passengers on the flight from Madison, this woman was dressed with some style and had obvious class. (People from Madison also have class, but they don't bother wear it. Nor do they EVER light up a cigarette.) She introduced herself as Barbara Barrow from Milwaukee who was going along on the same trip with us. Dennis Buettner had told her all about me.

Now I did know Dennis Buettner (Milwaukee landscape architect and designer of the Allen Centennial Garden) but wondered how he knew that I was a guru?? I also wondered why a non-member of the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society was going along on the trip? We went along making small talk for awhile and she asked me why my wife wasn't going along. I simply said the our wives had opted out on this tour. They thought it was foolish to spend so much money doing things they really didn't want to do (like visiting 25 gardens). Besides, they were organizing their own tour that would include shopping in 25 antique shops (that's each day) plus half of the retail stores on the British Isles. They also planned to hit the gift shops at the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Tate Gallery, and the British Museum. She was curious about the bag of plants I was carrying over for an English friend, which I guess seemed a natural thing for a "guru of all things green" to be doing. It then came out that gardening was a passionate hobby of mine and that I was a physician!

At this point she looked rather perplexed. "But Dennis told me you were a retired chairman of the department of horticulture. I didn't realize you had a dual career?" (Note, I had never made the proper introduction, a fault for which I am infamous.) Only then, did my two hours as the "guru of all things green" came to an abrupt end. "Why, I thought your name was Edward Hasselkus, she said?" We both broke out in raucous laughter as we realized my mistaken identity. And to think that I could be taken for Dr. Edward Hasselkus, Professor emeritus of Horticulture, and that I was actually vain enough to think that anyone would really think of me as a green guru. It was one of the events we shared together that evening on our quest to reach Jolly Old England despite the thwarting of the Airline Gods.

June 23: Arrival

I was met miraculously by my taxi service at Heathrow, rather than as scheduled at Gatwick. Then there was the two hour drive to the village of Battle and the Powder Mills Inn, a charming 15th century country inn like all the ones in which we were to lodge along the way. I learned that the village of Battle was the site of "The Battle"—the 1066 Battle of Hastings and the Norman Conquest of England. We enjoyed the ancient yew-lined walkways on the grounds of the abbey and the hanging baskets with their many different forms and colors of trailing lobelia in the village. Several flower shops had an amazing, very compact, pale blue campanula in tiny pots for sale—Campanula 'Elizabeth Oliver'. I was also amazed at the size of the Carex pendula in the woods surrounding the inn. This plant is a weed in Britain, even though we were to see it handsomely used in many English woodland gardens.

June 24: Dear God—We are at Sissinghurst (genuflect)

The morning dawned gloriously—bright blue sky strung with ribbons of stratus clouds. Went into Battle to get post cards and to nose around in the shops. Learned at 12 o'clock that the rest of the group arriving by bus would be late so had a delicious soup of celery and apple at the Powder Mills Inn. Shoved off to Sissinghurst with the WHPS at 1330. At approximately 1430 spied the twin turrets of the garden tower on the horizon (deep breath, gasp, our first garden).

We had three hours to spend in the magnificent garden that popularized a new English style—that of garden rooms. Vita Sackville West the plantswoman (daughter of Lord Sackville West) and her husband Harold Nicholson (the garden designer) created the most famous 20th century garden in England over a thirty-year period.

As a garden designed for a very awkward site which works well in all of its parts, it is unequalled. The view alone from the top of the 14th century tower was an overwhelming horticultural experience. Here I was at last looking down on the famed garden, whose rooms looked like a cluster of gems set in the gorgeous green of the Kent countryside. The white garden was larger and more lovely than ever imagined, though the intimacy was somewhat lost in the throngs of garden lovers on the narrow paths. The highlight was the huge rose arbor covered with its enormous dome of pure white flowering Rosa mulligani.

Touring the Gardens... (continued)

This is the most lasting image of Sissinghurst in my memory. The rose garden was also magnificent with mostly old fashioned roses, underplanted with a tapestry of perennials and annuals. I enjoyed the under plantings as much, or even more than, the roses themselves. The cottage garden with its yellows and oranges was a lovely counterpoint to the white garden. The plants of the day were *Cerinthe major* 'purpurea' and the tall, pale lavender *Clary salvia* 'turkestanica'. The former I learned was an annual, and the latter we were to see subsequently in most of the other gardens we would visit. Other great plants were *Macleaya microcarpa*—a shorter form of the plume poppy (*Macleaya cordata*) with pinkish flowers, and a beautiful stand of the white flowering *Astrantia maxima*. The fern, *Polystichum seitiferrum* was gorgeous throughout—extolling its virtues as a great architectural fern despite its very finely cut fronds. I also admired *Filipendula purpurea* in several large stands with wonderful pinkish plumes.

There was a dreamy portrait of Vita herself in the library of the main house and I enjoyed touring the farm outbuildings which included the original hops dryer (oast house) indigenous to Kent. Meeting Nigel Nicholson (son of Harold and Vita) in his gazebo-like office on the SE corner of the garden was very special. Strangely enough, the view from his office was not of his parents' garden but of the Kent countryside. Memorable images of the garden included the great bluestone edged borders, the walls consisting of old weathered brick, dark green yews or lime trees, an absence of water features, and the occasional dramatic view of the countryside. (Amen)

June 25: Great Christo!

The morning was gray and overcast with occasional showers but the weather improved on the hour or so drive to Wakehurst Place—a garden of the National Historic Trust and an extension of London's Kew Royal Botanical Garden. Had a tour by a "ranger" for the formal part of the 450-acre garden, which was very lovely. The bog and wall gardens were particularly fine and there were some marvelous woodies (*Thuja* 'Winston Churchill'). The candelabra primroses and the *Rogersias* were outstanding—especially *Rogersia pinnatum* 'Superba', with gorgeous pink plumes, the plant of the day. There were a number of other *Rogersias* with which I was not familiar. Other remarkable plants were *Campanula lactiflora* 'High Cliff' (tall, blue, delphinium-like), *Trapoleum speciosum* from Chile trailing everywhere with its deep red flowers but especially attractive through the foliage of a variegated *Daphne*, *Briza maximum* (a Mediterranean grass with very interesting "puffed wheat" seed pods), *Darmera peltata* var *nana* (great shade plant), and *Astilbioides tabularis* (formerly *Rogersia tabularis*).

Barely had time for a mad dash through the restaurant to grab a sandwich and drink before departing on the coach for Great Dixter.

Great Dixter was simply overwhelming—a true plantsman's garden with very unusual, eye catching plant combinations and outrageous design ideas. As the creation of a decades long labor of love of Christopher Lloyd (Christo to plant nuts), nearly every visual field was worthy of a picture. I shot two rolls of film there in a bat of an eye. Also got to meet Fergus Garrett—the head gardener for the past five years, who was featured recently in a Horticulture Magazine symposium at the Chicago Botanical Garden.

The plant of the day was *Dierama pulcherrimum*, or wand flower, also called Angel's fishing rod, which Christo placed almost magically as a single specimen in the sunken water garden. The mauve pink somewhat columbine-like flowers danced unbelievably on the ends of the long thin grass like foliage, just like a children's fishing rod with a small toy fish on the end of the line. It was simply impossible to take in everything. There were some species *Martagon* lilies in full bloom, a *Baptisia*, teasel (*Dispacus fullonum*), evening primroses, common roadside mulleins (*Verbascum olympicum*), and even *Houttuynia* 'Chameleon' in the water garden. The grassy meadow leading up to the formal entrance of the house was most unusual but very effective; however, the meadow effect used in the topiary garden was not to my taste, and an example of Christo's outrageous innovations. The exotic garden was just getting underway and was obviously in need of some good old hot, sticky US summer weather. Christo was reported lurking about, but I never caught a glimpse of him. Everyone hated to leave, given the gorgeous weather and garden when it was time to depart.

Had a delightful evening meal at the Powder Mills Inn, though our American group was treated with a little disdain by the hotel staff. One of the employees, upon hearing that most of the Americans were going down the street to a pub for dinner, was overheard to say "I'm going to the kitchen to put the staff out of their misery." And earlier in the day, a member of the breakfast room staff was heard to comment that they were going to put the Americans over in the corner, out of the way of the other guests! So much for British manners. We did learn from our terrific English guide, Frankie, that "smart casual" dress was preferred for the evening meals. This is translated as coat and tie for men and nothing worse than slacks for women. Trainers (athletic shoes), blue jeans and all other denim, were absolutely forbidden as examples of American gauche!

Visiting the Gardens... (continued)

June 26: Beth Chatto and the Blooms of Bressingham

It was a 2.5 hour drive from Battle to Elmstead Market, site of Beth Chatto's garden. So as to spend maximal time in the gardens, the group agreed to make a hurried stop at the motorway rest stop to buy provisions for a quick lunch to eat on the bus enroute. The weather was gray and threatening, so picnicking was out of the question, and explicitly forbidden in the Chatto garden besides. The Suffolk countryside (the "forgotten county" according to our guide Frankie) through which we passed was not nearly as picturesque as that of Kent and Surrey. The Essex and Norfolk landscapes were an improvement, however, especially the "flint" houses.

Beth Chatto's garden, despite a few showers of rain, was out of this world—Beth herself, a charming English woman but without English airs, was to be found strolling about answering visitors' questions. In her hands she carried a collection of blossoms to share with Andrew, her 90-year-old plus husband who was no longer able to walk in the garden because of his health. Beth did not inherit this garden or the money to make it, but scratched it out from the family's untillable farm land.

The dry garden was overwhelmingly beautiful, located in the former car park right at the garden entrance. The nursery area was fascinating, with all of the unusual plants for sale that were all listed in the nursery plant list entitled simply (what else?) "Unusual Plants." The collection of unnamed sempervirens in clay pots was astounding and a rare variegated form of Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum x hybridum* 'Striatum'), as well as a dwarf form of maiden hair fern (*Adiantum pedatum* 'Imbricatum') got me all excited. Over the entrance to the sales cottage was an enormous mass of clematis and a strangely familiar deep blue flower we had not yet seen in England—a form of deadly nightshade of all things (*Solanum dulcamara*—not *Solanum crispum*, commonly found in and around Madison). This vine plus the common giant mulleins (*Verbascum olympicum*), used everywhere, were examples of common roadside flowers used very effectively.

The garden itself was a real plantswoman's garden and the most beautiful garden in the purely artistic sense, that we would see. Many plant combinations were stunning and original. I was very much inspired. Of note was a short variegated grass—*Holcus mollis* 'Albovariegatus'—resembling a miniature form of garter grass. In the woodland garden we were all taken with Saxifrage geum 'Dentata' with leaves which appeared to be cut by pinkish shears, as well as the brilliant gold foliage of Saxifrage *moschata* 'Cloth of Gold'. *Teucrium scorodonia* 'Crispum

Marginatum' (a variant of an English native plant) wowed everyone with its curly edges—a very unusual groundcover for North Americans. (I have got to have this plant. Is anyone out there growing this one?) I was also impressed with the use of *Veratrum album*—a weed in wet places in North America.

The most impressive ferns, once again, were the many forms of *Polystichum*—used very effectively as large architectural statements. Oh, if only I could get this fern to grow in Wisconsin, though this was certainly an inspiration to try it once more. Again, the large clumps of *Rodgersia pinnata* 'Superba' in full bloom took your breath away. *Houttuynia cordata* 'Flora Pleno' and *Digitalis ferruginea* (copper-yellow, small flowered foxglove) also made my must-have list.

The afternoon was spent at Bressingham Gardens. Undoubtedly the world's largest and finest nursery display garden, this was an operation covering 260 acres. Unfortunately, Foggy Bottom (Adrian's Bloom's private garden) was closed and the nursery staff itself was preoccupied making preparations for a broadcast of the BBC's *Gardener's World* from the garden center the next day. Most of us skipped Alan Bloom's extensive collection of steam trains and I never did make it to the tea room which was inconveniently located far from the heart of the garden.

The use of island beds on a very large scale, an idea pioneered by Alan Bloom, was rather unique and was a great way for displaying plants "in the round." I was infatuated with the collection of hardy geraniums (wish I could grow more of these) and I never saw so many *Astrantias* in one garden. Took photos of 8 different ones, my favorites being an all pink one (unlabeled) and *Astrantia maxima* 'Ruby Wedding' (deep red), another must have. Also saw a new variegated phlox—*P. paniculatum* 'Harlequin'—sort of a tricolor beech of the phlox world. Also was taken with *Dicentra* 'Langtrees'. A miniature fern—*Athyrium felix-femina* *Minutissima*—took my fancy as well as a gorgeous specimen of *Athyrium felix-femina* *Vernoniae*!. I was struck with a new *Carex*—*Carex* 'Tinney's princess' (very fine, nearly white leaves), which was striking when planted in mass. Also in the same raised bed was *Trollius pumilus* and *Carex firma* 'Variegata', a very, very dwarf *Carex* that rock gardeners would kill for.

Perhaps the plant of the garden for me was the amazing *Alchemilla faeroensis* var *pumila*—the most miniature form of *Alchemilla* (lady's mantle) I have ever seen. It would have been grand if there had been a plant list or a catalogue available as at Chatto's garden. I would have paid almost anything for it.

Touting the Gardens... (continued)

Spent the night at the Swan in Lavenham, an inn dating back to the 14th century and, of course, absolutely charming. Walked around the old town briefly, peering into the small gardens and some of the antique shops. Had a wonderful lamb dinner, after which my roommate discovered that his key also opened the room next door. He unceremoniously walked in on a very proper, elderly English couple who were, to say the least, very surprised, but properly clothed thank goodness. We did learn later that they filed an official complaint with the hotel management, who were most understanding when they found out we were just plant nuts.

June 27: On to Cliveden and the Cotswolds

Rain showers began as we left Lavenham the next morning, but the weather continued to improve as we headed back towards London. Traveling around London on the M-25 was bad news. Seems all of greater London was on this ring road. Stopped at a large motor way restaurant and were totally engulfed by the "crinklies" (English for persons over age 65, as defined by our guide Frankie) all making their morning potty stop. Afterwards we were caught up in a big traffic jam where the M-25 merges with the M-1—another long delay here. Arrived at Cliveden at 1 PM.

Other than the formal terrace overlooking the vast parterre garden, this was a disappointment. Had a quick lunch in the restaurant (Darn! They were out of the potted cashew salad and the pear flan, both of which I drooled over waiting in line), during a series of tremendous downpours with thunder. Thank goodness I was inside, though other members of the group were less fortunate. Then it was off for Hidcote. This proved to be a much longer drive than expected by Max, our driver—nearly two hours. Didn't arrive there until 5 PM and conditions were very damp and dank with brief showers.

Only had an hour to spend in this Alice and Wonderland garden of small enchanting rooms, each more tantalizing than the next. The mosaic of hedges and the structure provided by the trees and shrubs was magical. There is no other garden quite like this one anywhere in the world. All agreed we should have skipped Cliveden and spent more time here.

The Hatton Court Hotel on a hillside overlooking the city Gloucester with the mountains of Wales on the horizon, was charming and elegant. As we were late arriving, we were rushed into the dining room before checking in to our rooms. We were unable to change into "smart dress" which was a little embarrassing for some us, but then at least it was obvious why we were put into the back corner

of the restaurant this time. The meal of salmon in a cream/saffron sauce and the dessert of summer pudding hit the spot. My guests for dinner, locals Sally and Gilbert Gough, who are very intense gardeners, regaled us with a description of their 1 acre garden 10-15 minutes away—160 different clematis, 100's of cultivars of hardy geraniums, stream, bridge, view of caterpillar hill, etc. A few of us vowed to get up the next morning, skip breakfast, and visit their garden.

The disaster of the evening (and the journey) occurred when the Dumbbells (friends of Ed Hasselkus), who were supposed to have joined us for dinner, somehow went to the wrong hotel and took our guest speaker with them. It was sometime before we realized what had happen. Poor Ed. The evening was ruined for him and he didn't enjoy his meal at all, not even dessert, which is saying something.

As I was on a quest for *Galanthus nivalis* 'Atkinsii' (a very tall, early flowering form), and Gilbert Gough was a galanthophile, who had promised to dig me a few bulbs. The next morning Ed and I did skip breakfast (the only meal we missed on the whole trip) to visit the garden of the Goughs. Gilbert picked us up 0800 sharp and off we went on the 20-minute ride to the other side of the city of Gloucester. Their modest home on a cul-de-sac gave only a hint from the front what lay to the rear. It was a gem of garden, somewhat higgly-piggly as Ed would say, but what was expected of two true plant alcoholics.

You should have seen the look on Sally's face (like a kid's at Christmas) when I presented her with the three Richard Weaver (We Du Nursery) *Epimediums* I had hand carried from the states. I was saddened to learn that Gilbert was also very interested in *Hepaticas* and had been trying to secure a double form. I could have brought him a piece of Mike Heger's (Ambergate Gardens) *H. americana* 'Louise', a double flowering form found in Minnesota.

The garden was notable for its use of lattice work to divide the relatively small space into rooms, these in turn covered with roses and Sally's collection of clematis. We enjoyed the view of Caterpillar Hill and I secured a half dozen bulbs of *G. nivalis* 'Atkinsii'. Gilbert was going to dig me up a piece a special pink *Hepatica*, but I forbade him as I was worried about customs with the bulbs as it was. The multitude of hardy geraniums were out this world and the number of flowering roses and clematises were overwhelming. I loved their system of ropes and poles to support the clematis. Sally had a clematis on every shrub, timed to bloom after the shrub itself and selected so that the particular clematis flower complimented the shrub's foliage. Thus all the shrubs had a "second" flush of bloom.

Visiting the Gardens... (continued)

After our visit, Gilbert took us directly to Painswick Rococo Garden, where we met up with the rest of the group. Gilbert was a memorable character, and we picked up some good English slang from him—"spend a penny" (take a leak, only I discovered it costs 20 pennies), "belts and braces" (to earn a little extra money for insurance purposes, and to support their plant habit).

We were greeted at Painswick by Lord Dickinson himself, who told us the wonderful story of the gardens restoration. He had inherited the place in the 1960's, but did not have enough money to maintain the gardens, so just planted it with trees. In 1983, when it was figured out that a painting in the dining room was really a plan for a rococo garden around the house, restoration of this rococo garden (1720-1760, a brief transition period in the history of gardening) commenced, and it is now the only one of its kind in Great Britain. A private foundation/trust was formed to complete and maintain the restoration in 1987. The views from the garden over the surrounding Cotswolds countryside were lovely, and the follies were intriguing and wonderful accents. The symmetrical kitchen garden below the "Exedra" (an outdoor area with seats where conversation is held) was the finest we had seen on the trip so far.

Also had a nice little garden shop and nursery. The lunch in the house's main dining room was superb and Lord and Lady Dickinson who were presiding, were charming. They actually helped serve us and we were all intrigued that Lord Dickinson actually cleared the dishes off the table. We were waited on by a Lord, after all. We were also surprised to learn that this was one of only a few such luncheons they had done. They told us that to maintain the estate, they charged 800 pounds for a wedding reception for a 100 persons and up to 1500 pounds for a reception which included an evening of dancing. I must say the whole place had a little of the Jane Austen feel to it.

The final garden for the day was Stourhead. The ride down to Bath and surroundings revealed a spectacular countryside, and we all enjoyed the bucolic scenery and views of the city of Bath. Stourhead itself was magnificent—a calming, serene "green garden," which reminded me of Student Royal-Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire. You could purchase a list of the trees (identified by numbers) contained in the two mile walk around the lake. This was great fun as some of the trees were the largest of their kind in Britain. The *Chamaecyparis lawsonii* was in fact the largest one imaginable and even the *Davidia* tree was the largest I had ever seen (not in flower). The follies (replicas of the temples of Flora and Apollo as well as the Parthenon) set around the lake with their scenic views were haunting. There was also a wonderful grotto with life-

size figures of a river god and a sleeping nymph in all of their subterranean splendor.

Unfortunately, the restaurant was closed by the time we made it around the lake, so we did not take cream tea, much to our disappointment. Our Rose & Crown Hotel in the nearby town of Salisbury was a lovely 14th century inn. We had a very large room in one of the new wings with a wonderful view of the rose garden, as well as a view across the river Avon to the tower of the cathedral. After dinner, we strolled about the cathedral itself until after 10 PM. Needless to say it was enchanting in the evening light.

June 29: The Test!

Today separated the true Hort Hounds from the rest of the lot. About a third of the group elected to go out to the Salisbury plain to see some old stones. Well, all right, they are covered with lichens which are thousands of years old, but, all in all, Stonehenge is not of any horticultural merit. I wonder if the druids used any ancient herbs in their incantations for the summer's solstice which would have occurred a week or so before our arrival?

The rest of the true greens took a short bus ride to Hillier Gardens and Arboretum, a magnificent collection of 13,000 woody plants set in a beautiful garden. Plant of the day was *Cornus mas aurea* 'Eligantissima', which someone said was available from Herronswood Nursery at times. The variegated Kentucky coffee tree (*Gymnocladus dioica*) was the most unique woody that we saw. Our guide was Alan Coombes, the famed botanist of the garden, whose name some of you may recognize from articles in *The New Plantsman* and *The Garden*.

The one-hour tour, which was delightful, stretched into two, and we had to almost beg off in order to get a bite in the Jermyns House, as well as be able to hit the garden center store (generally disappointing—too much plastic stuff).

In the afternoon, we visited Montisfort Abbey, a merciful 10-minute bus ride away. The entrance lawn to the estate contained the largest London Plane tree in the British Isles. A wonderful avenue of *Cedrus atlanticum* lead from the rear of the manor house to the rose garden, dramatically setting the stage for the act to follow.

We were awed by the rose garden—two very large rooms with walls of warm rosy brick. This was not a rose garden consisting of sticks of hybrid teas stuck in cocoa mulch desert, but a garden of the national collection of heritage rose designed by Graham Stuart Thomas. The plantings

Visiting the Gardens... (continued)

beneath the roses were a highlight—all sorts of perennials and a few annuals forming a glorious tapestry to highlight the roses. It included martagon lilies, and even a wonderful old apple tree stuffed full of mistletoe. The simple rope arches of roses and clematis were gorgeous. Clematis were also used extensively to twine up through the rose bushes. (See the new book out by John Howells—*The Rose and the Clematis as Good Companions*.) We learned that the roses were not dead headed, as most of them flowered only once and the hips were counted on for a colorful display later in the season.

We arrived back at the hotel by 1630, so most of us did a little shopping for the folks back home in the shops of Salisbury before scurrying over to the cathedral to attend the Evensong service at 1730. This was marvelous. During the processional of the choir the music soared throughout the cathedral and you had no idea from where the voices were coming. The choir was made up of a dozen small girls and a half-dozen men and their singing, plus the reverberations of the great organ, were the highlight of the service. As this was the Church of England, it was just one step removed from a Catholic mass, thanks to Henry the Eighth.

Dinner at the Rose and Crown that evening was not as pleasant as it could have been, as we were placed conspicuously at a very large table in the dining room. Furthermore, the dessert trifle with canned fruit cocktail was an abomination and not worthy of the name.

June 30: The "shitek"

As usual the day began fairly sunny, if you rose early enough (0530), but by 0700 the clouds had rolled in. That didn't stop a number of us from scurrying over to the cathedral green to snap a few more pictures, and fortunately the sun smiled wanly on the massive steeple. Then we motored to great Windsor Park, containing the Saville and Valley Gardens. Along the way, we crossed over the magnificent three-mile avenue of chestnut trees leading to the main entrance of Windsor Castle.

At Saville, we were met by Mr. Mark Flannigan, "Keeper of the Garden." He led us on a one-hour tour of the 35-acre garden after coffee. Between the two gardens, a number of national collections are held—magnolias, rhododendrons, holly, dwarf conifers, pieris, mahonia, and pernettya.

I was particularly impressed with the collection of martagon lily hybrids, most of which were not labeled. Mark amused us with his pronunciation, especially "herma-roc-u-lis" for *hemerocallis*. I whispered this into a nearby

colleague's ear, at which point I startled her so that she let out a great Edward Munch like shriek heard throughout the 4,500 acres of Great Windsor Park.

The Kusa dogwoods and their hybrids in full bloom were especially beautiful. The cut leaf alder, *Alder glutinosa* 'Imperialis', was stunning. It is hardy to zone 4. It also contained the most magnificent fern collection we had seen—many forms of *Polystichum seiferum*, some unusual forms of the royal fern, and many variations of *Athyrium*.

I also got a good appreciation for why the English do not favor *hosta*—talk about slug eaten, even by the end of June! You can see why they don't bother with *hosta*, as there are so many other lovely things not relished by these slimy mollusks. An English woman standing next to me informed us that you must get out with your salt pot nightly if you want to grow *hostas*. There was also a wonderful red leafed *Heuchera* with pink flowers, H. 'Rachel'. We will all have to look for this one. The New Zealand collection was charming, especially the many forms of *Hebes*. Oh, if we could only grow this woody in all of its form in Wisconsin.

Then, it was on to Valley Gardens—400 plus acres. I never made it out of the collection of dwarf conifers. After all, there were only 1500 to look at, and many were the largest of a particular species and cultivar that I had ever seen. *Picea koreana* 'Horstsmans Silberlocks' was a good 15 feet tall, and in fact there was a whole grove of them!! I was amazed at the sheer number of forms of *T. canadensis*.

Afterwards, it was a short bus ride to Christobel garden for afternoon tea. This was a small garden, some aspects of it very lovely, but Christobel seemed to be far more interested in her horses than her garden. In fact, many parts of the garden were really not suitable for touring. You might have called it the garden of "Comic Relief" after all the spectacular ones we had seen. We did have a wonderful tea in her home with delicious cakes flavored with ginger and burnt caramel—yummy—the best pastries of the trip.

Our charming hotel that evening was the Swan Diplomat on the River Thames, most picturesque. Our large room with *Lilium* 'Stargazer' perfuming the place, had a lovely view over the Thames and the sculls working their way up to the weir in front of the hotel. However, there wasn't a swan in sight. I was also told that just down the river was Henley, site of the famous Royal Henley Regatta which would take place in the coming week—a place to be largely seen in your elegant attire, the boat races themselves being only secondary.

Touring the Gardens... (continued)

July 1: *All Good Things Must Come to an End*

It began with a coach ride to Folly Farm, one of the few surviving Edwin Lutyens-Gertrude Jekyll combination house and garden creations, in the classic Arts and Crafts style. The architectural details of the brick house were beautifully reflected in the hardscaping of the garden. There was a wonderful sunken rose garden built around a fountain, a formal reflecting pool, and another wonderful rectangular pool built right in front of the house proper. It was incongruously decorated with those half whiskey barrels painted a ghastly white. Bumps and Eddie definitely would not have approved. Another pool was filled in and planted with large blue hostas.

What was missing were the great Jekyll borders now replaced with turf. If only one of these 20-foot-deep, 100-yard-long borders had been restored, the setting would have been nearly complete. As the original owners had six gardeners, it is easy to see why things had to be simplified for these times.

As an interesting note of history, the home was used as a maternity hospital during WWII and literally thousands of babies were born there, most of whose fathers were away at war. What a wonderful place to begin life. We also met the head gardener, who was working with an area that had to be completely dug over and sterilized due to a "plague of convolvulus" (better known as bindweed).

Then it was on to our final destination, Wisley, the great garden of the Royal Horticulture Society (founded in 1802). The garden itself dates from 1902. The variety of gardens within this large garden is unequalled anywhere in England, and we all marveled at the great rock garden (completely rebuilt in the last 10 years to reflect modern tastes for smaller rocks rather than the great monolithic stones favored by the Victorians and Edwardians).

The alpine houses were overwhelming, with their treasures in full bloom and displayed in counter-top fashion like jewels in a very fine jewelry store, complete with an appropriate security alarm system. The only plants that I recognized was *Thalictrum kiusianum* and a few very miniature versions of hardy ferns that I grew in my own garden.

Of the indoor conservatories, the most impressive was the fuchsia house, which featured the most spectacular collection of fuchsias imaginable. The size of the flowers ranged from the size of a penny to that of a small apple. The fruit garden of miniature trees for the small home garden was also very impressive. I was especially impressed with the apple tree 'Ballerina', which, when ar-

ranged in a row, did indeed resemble a host of namesake dancers, if you can appreciate such a comparison.

We were also bowled over by the great Wisley trial gardens. As you crested the hill and viewed the massive rectangles of 6-foot-high delphiniums and 10-foot-high rows of sweet peas of nearly every color, it elicited the "Oh, my god" response of disbelief from nearly everyone. I saw several very interesting pulmonarias in the pulmonaria trial garden, consisting of great masses of foliage standing nearly two feet tall. Unfortunately, they were only identified by number, as apparently the names are under dispute and the correct identification cannot be agreed upon. We also learned from one of the gardeners that Christopher Lloyd had been there only an hour before to view and evaluate the delphiniums. What fun it would have been to salivate over these with his witty and sarcastic tongue.

The long walk with its massive 20' deep 150-yard double perennial borders, was several weeks away from its summer peak, but still an unbelievable site. I was impressed with the use of Paulownia and Catalpa trees, obviously cut to the ground every year, creating huge leafed specimens which gave an exotic effect to the borders. The golden Catalpa was especially beautiful. The woodland garden was also a site to behold, with great masses of ferns, epimediums, hardy geraniums and lilies. Again, the slug-eaten hostas told the story of why this wonderful genus of plants is less favored in the British Isles.

Everyone indulged themselves a couple of times in the restaurant area as we spent 5 hours at Wisley. The garden center was fantastic, with the largest selection of Whichford pottery I had ever seen. A plant for sale which caught my eye was a very black leafed dwarf astilbe—'Bumalda', definitely a cultivar to look out for!! Everyone spent the better part of an hour in the bookstore, one of the largest bookstores of horticulture interest in the world. It is the only place where you can by all of the publications of the RHS. There was also an area where small gardens were on display. Some of these were directly transported from the Chelsea show in May, and the variety of themes utilized in these small gardens was very impressive. It is hard to believe that so much variety could exist in such relatively small spaces. Truly inspirational. The fence of living willow in crisscross patterns and a gazebo of pleated, living beech was very unique. The British have such imagination when it comes to plants.

The good-bye dinner in the hotel that night was a memorable occasion. Max (our natty bus driver) informed us that we had covered 1,317 gardening miles, and both Barbara and Joan regaled us with their poetic interpretations

Touring the Gardens... (continued)

of our wonderful odyssey. For sure, we all vowed that we would repeat this garden journey to the English countryside in two years time.

—A. Hort Hound



Musings from the tour

Heart happy again
Searching out plants by daylight
Talking plants all night.

Jackdaws not impressed
By mystery or power
Gossip at Stonehenge.

Rich and well tended
Full of incredible things
Wisley wins our praise.

—Joan Severra

Darting through the valleys of the ancient isle of splendor,
I've encountered wondrous mates of passion and lore.
Friendships have blossomed--some stem from years galore,
But the roots of our camaraderie, which will last for
evermore,
Are the flora and the arbora that we truly adore.

So first to Dennis and Nancy who apprised me of the trip,
My thanks I shower in greater volume than mere drabs or
drip.
Then to Frankie who so bravely bore her stiff upper lip,
The few times my clock seemed slower that she almost did a
flip!

Then to the chap from Durham central, who round each
hairpin bend did steer,
And with aplomb the handsome hedges mercilessly did
shear,
Who maneuvers like a bike the behemoth in rear gear,
Thank you for getting us safely, soundly, and timely to....
here!

To all who with me traveled far, and like gawking weirdoes
did appear,
Thanks for the ride--see you in two "year."

—Barbara R. Barrow
English Garden Tour 1 July 1998
Streatley-on-Thames

Open Garden Jitters

They are coming to see my garden.
They'll pour in the gate and begin
To peer in each last nook and cranny,
And search out my every sin.

If I turn my back for a moment
The buttercups hop, skip and jump,
And dandelions seed themselves merrily.
Overnight it can look like a dump.

I had meant to deadhead the pansies,
And tie up the roses with twine:
And I wish I could find all the labels,
And I hadn't hard pruned that vine.

I did move the blue Agapanthus
To sunnier far better site,
So the leaves and the buds do look gorgeous,
But I bet they say, "we have the white!"

I'm sure they don't have that Euphorbia,
The seed came from England, of course;
But they often don't notice Euphorbias,
And seldom inquire as to source.

The wonderful plant with the red flowers
Is bound to attract every eye,
But I can't remember it's title,
I shall just have to swallow-and lie.

So tomorrow my garden is open,
For better or worse as they say,
Let's hope for a nice group of people,
And above all, a hot sunny day.

—From a poem by Anne Cooper



Gardening for pleasure—for the refreshment of the eyes, the body, and the whole being—began with the domestication of shade. The first pleasure gardens were retreats from the Biblical desert, inspired by the natural oasis. To the parched mind and body, the oasis was a place of supernal attraction, a pool of shade, of coolness, and of water. The home garden was conceived as a private fragment of this luxury of nature.



—George Schenk, *The Complete Shade Gardener*
(supernal = as though from heaven)

The greatest service which can be rendered any country is to add a useful plant to its culture.

—Thomas Jefferson

Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society

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- INDIVIDUAL.....\$8.00
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Expertise I have that may be useful to the Society: computer, journalism, publishing, public relations, horticulture, landscape profession, etc.: _____

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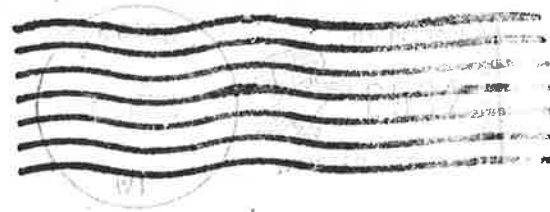
So basic.
So yellow,
the yolk
that remains
unbroken
when the
white petals
all around you
crack wide
open.

—Ann Murphy Fletcher

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