Bulletin of the American Rock Garden Society

VOL. 42 50th Anniversary Issue NO. 5

THE BULLETIN

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ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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The Anniversary Celebration

Laura Louise Foster
Falls Village, Connecticut

The Fiftieth Anniversary of the American Rock Garden Society was celebrated at the University of North Carolina—Asheville in the Blue Ridge Mountains from June 6 through 11 by 289 members from 28 of the United States and 6 other countries. In addition to the celebration itself there were pre-and-post tours, which went further afield, for those who wished to join them. The pre-Anniversary trip, led by Sandra Ladendorf and Ken Moore started from Chapel Hill, N.C. on June 1 and covered private and university gardens, nurseries and wildflower areas on the shore, Coastal Plain and in the Piedmont and Sand Hills of the state. The post-Anniversary trip, led by Ruby Pharr, made a more extended exploration of some of the more distant mountains on the western slope of the Blue Ridge chain.

In addition to these pre-and-post tours there were daily trips during the Anniversary conference itself to visit gardens and explore the beautiful natural areas in the environs of Asheville. These daily trips, each covering a different locale, were so arranged that everyone could participate in all five of the tours if they wished to.

The Southern Appalachians have no alpines in the true sense of the word as they are forested to their summits, but they are the home of many beautiful wildflowers, many of which have been brought into our gardens, and in early spring the woodlands are aglow with such plants as *Shortia galacifolia*, trilliums, phlox, hepaticas, and a wealth of other flowering herbs in addition to the laurel, azaleas, rhododendrons and flowering trees. Ample time was allowed on all the trips to trail walk in the wild areas and thoroughly explore the various gardens. There were expert leaders available on each of the five buses and at each site there were botanically knowledgeable guides to point out and identify not only

the plants but in many cases the birds as well. It was late in the season for the best bloom, but there were a number of later flowering and perhaps less familiar plants to admire.

It is not possible to cover all the areas visited in detail, but this participant would like to touch on some of the highlights that impressed her particularly: the magnificent native and exotic trees and their superb placement along the access road into the Biltmore estate and in the long, informal valley garden that extends below the formal gardens around the house. Only a landscape artist as knowledgeable and skillful as the designer of this garden, Frederick Law Olmsted, could have had the vision to foresee the mature and balanced landscape that would result nearly a hundred years later as he placed the immature saplings and spindly shrubs in position along the winding driveway and paths that lead so apparently inevitably through the meadows, fields and woodlands of this varied and extremely beautiful terrain.

The peace, enhanced by the sound of rushing, gurgling water and the song of a wood thrush that accompained us as we strolled under the tall, dark trees rising from lush beds of ferns and wildflowers on the trail along Cove Creek and the curtains of pink and white laurel overhanging the dark pools and frothing rapids of the creek itself.

Ritchie Bell preaching to the faithful.
Hohei Ueki

The lush emerald of the moss lawn under the trees near the house in the garden of Mr. and Mrs. Doan Ogden in Asheville and the extraordinary variety of shrubs and herbaceous plants along the paths that wound down through the towering rhododendrons in the gorge below.

The clustered, sculptural elegance and subtle coloration of the numerous species and hybrids of sarracenia, interspersed with pink spikes of *Helonias bullata*, in the little man-created bog in Tom and Bruce Shinn's garden and the white candles of the *Chamaelirium luteum*, both staminate and pistillate, scattered among the many other native plants, naturalized along the paths through the woods.

The regal clumps of *Cypripedium reginae* rising from a bed of *Parnassia asarifolia*, the lovingly placed planting of *Dionaea muscipula* and *Listera smallii* in a little sandbed alongside the brook, and the glistening carpets of *Shortia galacifolia* naturalized along both sides of the path hacked through the "rhododendron hell" in Charlie Moore's Preserve.

The pair of ravens that croaked above us as they executed their aerial courtship display as we climbed the steep path up through a forest of stunted, twisted yellow birch to a rhododendron bald in the Craggies and the hip-high, wind-sculptured thickets of *Rhododendron catawbiense*, studded with fat, pointed flower buds swollen to bursting that crowned the summit.

But perhaps most of all I will hold in my memory the eritrichium-blue of *Houstonia serpyllifolia*, not in tiny discreet clumps half-hidden in the surrounding verdure, but spread in glorious swathes and sheets of fallen sky that lay alongside the road on the way to Mount Mitchell.

Not everyone went on these organized trips. Some of those with private cars carpooled to visit friends and their gardens or went to local nurseries or wildflower areas not on the tour schedule because of the difficulty of reaching them by bus.

Trips afield were not the only activities provided for those who attended the Anniversary celebration. There was a reception late on the afternoon of our arrival held at the old mountain homestead in the University Botanic Garden, there were parties and a picnic, and there were fascinating lectures every evening after dinner.

The first of these on Wednesday evening was given by Dr. C. Ritchie Bell, Professor of Botany at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill and Director of the North Carolina Botanical Garden. He was a mine of wonderful old folk lore about the native plants, which he presented with a delightful dry wit. His illustrated talk on North Carolinian flora from the sea coast to the mountain tops stressed the role that these plants have played and are still playing as our culture has changed from that of the resident Indians and early white settlers to that of the present. A thoroughly informed and amusing speaker, Dr. Bell presented a viewpoint of our native plants seldom considered.

The following evening Richard M. Smith, President of the Western Carolina Botanical Club, gave an excellent talk on the early "botanists" who had brought the wide extent and value of the North American flora to the attention of the European world. Beginning with the Norwegian landfalls in the north and their reports of finding a land covered with thickets of wine grapes, he traced the various plants discovered by later expeditions to these shores, showing how these discoveries influenced the settlement of this country. By using a skillful combination of pictures of the explorers themselves, the plants they found, and the areas they traversed, Mr. Smith brought to life the difficulties and excitement of these early botanical explorations in the wilderness of the East Coast of North America by such men as Michaux, Nuttall, the Bartrams, Catesby and Raffinesque.

Mr. Smith was followed that same evening by Barry Yinger who, after a number of years of living in Japan, Korea and Taiwan collecting plants for introduction into the United States for various nurseries and for the Cholipo Arboretum in Korea, is presently Curator of the Asian Collection at the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. Mr. Yinger, who speaks, reads, and writes Japanese fluently, is probably as well versed in the plants of these islands as any American and can therefore speak with authority and great feeling about them. His talk was on the close relationship of these plants to the flora of North Carolina and his beautiful slides of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants of Japan and Korea clearly showed how similar the flora of these countries is to that of the eastern seaboard of the United States, particularly the Southern Appalachians.

The first lecture on the following Friday evening by Dr. T. Lawrence Mellichamp, Associate Professor of Botany at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte had a somewhat intimidating title, "Pollination Biology in Western North Carolina Mountains," but his audience need not have worried; this was no dry, didactic paper on an abstruse botanical subject. From his first slide and word Dr. Mellichamp had us all greatly amused and completely captivated by the many ways in which flowers conduct their sex lives and when necessary entice a great variety of bugs, beetles, bees, butterflies and birds to help them in this activity.

This informative and entertaining talk was followed by Anthony D. Schilling, who regaled us with magnificent slides of the Himalayas and its flora to accompany his discussion of "Asian Counterparts to

Cyprepedium reginae (spectabile) in Charlie Moore's Preserve.
Judy Glattstein

Sarracenia Bog in Tom and Bruce Shinn's garden.
Judy Glattstein

the North Carolina Rhododendron Forest and Their Companion Plants." Mr. Schilling has had a varied career since he started in horticulture at the University Botanic Gardens, Cambridge, England. He has explored for plants in such widely separated locales as Scandinavia, the Mediterranian Basin and the high Himalayas where he has covered almost every valley between Annapurna and Kanchenjunga. In addition he has been on the staff at the Royal Botanic Gardens-Kew from whence he was invited to Nepal to design and oversee the construction of a Royal Botanic Garden in Kathmandu Valley for the Royal Nepali Government. He is presently Deputy Curator in charge of Wakehurst Place, Kew's extension in Sussex, which is largely planted to mature specimens of Himalayan plants brought back by early plant explorers. A superb photographer and skilled lecturer, Mr. Schilling presented an outstanding talk covering the rare and beautiful relatives of North Carolinian trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants in the Himalayas along with breathtaking glimpses of their habitat.

The official Celebration of the 50th Anniversary took place on Saturday evening at Deer Park on the Biltmore grounds. It was truly a gala affair complete with a Dixieland band, bagpipers (who also woke us every morning for breakfast and piped us into lectures), a souvenir menu and a huge birthday cake. Taking place in a delightful cloistered garden centered by a dance floor, it opened with cocktail dancing prior to an elegant dinner.

This was followed by the presentation of the American Rock Garden Society Awards: the Award of Merit to Marvin Black of Seattle, Washington, the Marcel Le Piniec Award to Thomas and Bruce Shinn, of Leicester, North Carolina, and the Edgar T. Wherry Award to Dr. C. Ritchie Bell of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. A fourth and very special award, the Gold Medal, was then presented to the "Founding Father" of the ARGS, Thomas H. Everett, who gave a most amusing, anecdotal acceptance speech in which he regaled us with a few tales of his first encounters with North Carolinian politicians and "moonshiners" while trying to obtain "corn likker." His stories had us rocking and gasping with laughter. (The Award citations will be found on page 179 of the regular Fall issue, Vol. 42, No. 4.)

The Anniversary Cake, sparkling with candles, was then paraded in by bagpipers and presented to the five past-presidents in attendance, the newly elected president, Kenneth Love, and Mr. Everett, who cut the first slice.

This ceremony completed, chairs were rearranged so as to make it possible to face the screen in preparation for Frank Cabot's delightful and informative talk, "As It Was in the Beginning," in which he recounted the origin and roots of rock gardening in North America. Thus ended the most enjoyable festivities. (The text of this talk appears later in this issue.)

On Sunday evening we were treated to a lecture "Developing Microclimates for Environment-Specific Plants" by Dr. J.C. Raulston, Professor of Horticultural Science at North Carolina University-Raleigh. He is also responsible for the NCSU arboretum of 3500 taxa. With three projectors, and three screens set edge to edge, Dr. Raulston absorbed us into truly wide, wide screen illustrations of the environments he was discussing, be it a Southwestern desert, a tundra, a prairie, a swamp, a temperate forest or a man-created facsimile of one of these features. He covered not only such horticultural artifacts as gardens, but climate-controlled glass houses and even the refrigerated case at Kew, pointing out in each case how man has attempted to reproduce the climatological essentials needed by plants when grown out of their native haunts. It was a most informative and fascinating talk.

President Robert Means presenting the Marcel Le Piniec Award to Thomas Shinn while Dr. Bell and President-Elect Kenneth Love look on.
Sherry Coffey

H. Lincoln Foster and Sandra Ladendorf presented the Edgar T. Wherry Award to Dr. C. Ritchie Bell.
Sherry Coffey

THE BANQUET

William Lanier Hunt describing the early days of ARGS in the South Atlantic region.

Sherry Coffey

Thomas H. Everett accepting the Gold Medal before past Presidents Foster, Means, Butler, Minogue and Epstein.

Sherry Coffey

AWARDS

Piping in the 50th Anniversary cake.
Sherry Coffey

Celebrants arriving at Deer Park.
Sherry Coffey

THE

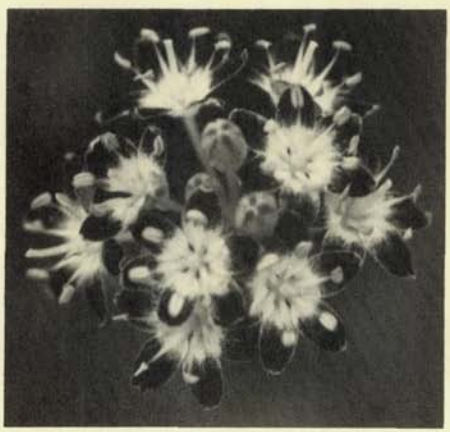
A refreshing moment in a busy week.
Sherry Coffey

Thomas H. Everett, the Founding Father of ARGS, cutting the Anniversary Cake with President Emeritus Epstein and Presidents Means and Love in attendance.
Sherry Coffey

CELEBRATION

The evening was brought to a close by Frederick Case, teacher, botanist and author of Saginaw, Michigan, who gave one of his excellent double-screen lectures, this one on "Pitchers, Trilliums, and Treasures of North America" in which he discussed some of the most exciting and garden-worthy native plants of this country from east to west and from south to north. Some of these as he pointed out are already in general cultivation and some are grown by specialists, but many are considered too difficult to cultivate and are not grown though they should be. He gave many suggestions about the culture of those difficult ones presently grown in gardens, but the crux of Mr. Case's talk was that we, as gardeners, must make more effort to learn how to tame the really recalcitrant beauties so we can bring these too into cultivation, not only so we can enjoy them in our gardens but, in some cases, for their own salvation.

The final evening of the Anniversary was largely given over to an old-fashioned North Carolina barbecue picnic complete with a whole roast pig slow-roasted over a pit full of hot coals while it was being continually slathered with barbecue sauce. Not that this comprised the whole feast as chicken, beef, salads, corn on the cob and goodness knows what else was also available. A barbershop quartet wandered among the picnic tables set up in a pine grove, and a hill country band supplied mountain music to accompany the group of cloggers who performed the local variant of country dancing, which was a frenetic combination of tap dancing, square dances and reels. As the evening progressed more and more of the onlookers joined in until the dance floor under the huge mushroom-shaped, woodshingled marquee was a seething sea of twirling, hopping dancers: southerners, northerners, easterners, westerners, Scots, English, Norwegians, New Zealanders, and Japanese together, until we all collapsed in exhaustion to watch the local experts give a grand finale exhibition of how it really should be done.



A novel, purple-banded form of *Clintonia umbellulata* found on the Buck Springs Trail between Buck Springs Gap and Pizgah Inn.
A.D. Schilling

But the main events of the evening were yet to come. The picnic benches were dragged under the marquee and, the band and the cloggers departed for a well-earned rest as we gathered for the valedictory ceremonies and final talk of the week.

Frank Cabot, who had to a large extent masterminded the celebration, acted as master of ceremonies. He extended thanks to the many who had done so much to make it the success it was. His thanks included the attendees who had put up with the heat and occasional discomforts of dormitory living; President Emeritus Harold Epstein who had in the first instant suggested that the 50th Anniversary be held in Asheville; the members of the North Carolina Wild Flower Preservation Society, the Western Carolina Botanical Club and the Western North Carolina Chapter of ARGS who had organized trips, acted as tour leaders and guides before, after, and during the meeting and, in some cases had, in addition, given talks, organized the exhibits, the members' plant sale, the plant auction, and the nursery sale (which have not been

previously mentioned in this report, but were nonetheless splendid); the garden hosts and those who assisted them; and finally, but not least of all, the women in his life: colleague and co-organizer Ann Hulsey, his wife Anne and daughter Marianne, who between them manned the reservation desk and acted as willing gaffers "despite the frantic, frenetic, and frequent fits of their close associate."

After a few anecdotes about North Carolina's mountain people told by one of them, Charlie Moore, the new officers were introduced and the newly elected president, Ken Love, thanked the past-president, Bob Means for his excellent leadership during the past few years. He also thanked Frank Cabot, as did we all, and those involved for the smashing celebration of the 50th Anniversary we had enjoyed so much.

Before introducing the main speaker of the evening, Frank then rose once more to present one last piece of business that required the action of those assembled. He announced that it had been felt by some members of the Society that it lacked only one thing, an American Rock Garden Society Song (barely suppressed groans from the audience), and that a small committee had therefore been formed to produce one and he proposed to present it forthwith for approval. Whereupon, with background harmony supplied by the barbershop quartet, Frank broke into a clear tenor to the amazed delight of all. Wild, enthusiastic applause and cheering interrupted his rendition after the first verse, but the audience was finally quieted sufficiently to allow him to finish and even join in the final chorus. The new ARGS Song was obviously approved by acclamation.

Michael Stone, who with his wife Polly has established a consummate alpine garden in Fort Augustus in the Scottish mountains, had the difficult task of following Frank's tour de force, but he did so nobly. His slides were exquisite and the plants he showed, many seldom grown or even seen by American rock gardeners, were stunning. This along with the excellent and detailed advice about how they are grown in a one and a half-acre garden made for a memorable lecture and was a fitting climax to the evening.

Frank Cabot and Quartet inaugurating the ARGS Hymn at the barbecue.
Hohei Ueki

Pre-Conference Tour: Exploring North Carolina's Habitats

Judy Glattstein
Wilton, Connecticut

If it is true that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, the American Rock Garden Society 50th Annual Meeting began in my driveway. I had decided to attend everything, the pre-tour, the conference, the post-tour. I thought I would like to see more of the country than the view from an airplane. Sally Katkaveck, also of Connecticut, was my traveling companion. Her husband urged us to take his truck, rather than my Volkswagen Rabbit. That way, he said, we'd have room for more plants. Smart man.

The first day, through New Jersey and on to Front Royal, Virgina in the rain was anticipatory pleasure. Sunset in Shenandoah National Park was lovely, but the next day, June 1st, 1984, along the Skyline Drive of the Blue Ridge Parkway, had its problems. I would see something I wanted to photograph and Sally would obligingly swerve to the side of the road. Then it would be my turn to drive, and to stop. We saw *Viola pedata*, *Saxifraga michauxii*, azaleas in profusion, two wild turkeys, *Trillium grandiflorum* with faded flowers of an intense cerise pink, indigo

Plant hunting in the Green Swamp.
Joann Knapp

buntings, *Gillenia trifoliata*. I'd read about Bowman's root, or Fawn's Breath as it is also called, but had not appreciated how dainty a plant it is. When we realized that the first 36 miles had taken us three hours we decided to pick up the pace. After all, we were supposed to be in Chapel Hill, N.C. to join the Pre-Conference Tour that afternoon, and at this rate we would be there at the close of the conference.

The Carolina Inn was easy to find. Checking in went smoothly and each of us got cute little name tags to wear around our necks. This did save switching them from shirt to shirt each day, but some people had problems when showering. Sally and I were assigned to "B" bus, and off we went. Our bus went to the garden of Jane and Bob Welshmer in Chapel Hill. This woodland garden has many azaleas, meandering paths, and lots of the native plants suitable for such a setting. I was particularly impressed with the evergreen gingers, *Hexastylis*, native to so much of the Appalachian Mountains. It was not until dusk was falling, that we climbed on the bus and went on to Sandra and Ray Ladendorf's. Sandra was organizer for the pre-tour and one of our leaders; Ken Moore, Superintendent of the North Carolina Botanical Garden was the other. Both busloads joined for an informal dinner at the Ladendorf's, which gave all sixty of us, plus leaders an opportunity to meet each other. As well as a hearty contingent from the United States, there were fellow enthusiasts from Canada, Norway, England and Japan.

The next morning, Saturday June 2, a small contingent met in the lobby at 6:30 a.m. for an early morning walk led by Bill Hunt, one of the founding members of the ARGS. He gave us an interesting tour of the campus of the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, pointing out some of the specimen trees. After breakfast, "B" bus went to the North Carolina State University Arboretum in Raleigh, while "A" bus went to the Sarah Duke Gardens in Durham. In the afternoon we reversed destinations. This arrangement of staggering the visits to a given site, was well planned to prevent crowding. Even thirty people can be a large group to handle when speaking outdoors. The Arboretum is relatively new. It is designed to introduce students to techniques of arboriculture and ornamental horticulture. Many interesting trees and shrubs, a large perennial border, and some really excellent plants in a lath house were what we saw. J.C. Raulston was an informative and congenial host. The afternoon visit to the Sarah Duke Gardens was even more to my taste. Ed Steffek, Jr., who is in charge of the gardens, is using native plants in an ornamental fashion. He is not re-creating a natural landscape, but rather designing plantings that replace the ubiquitous pachysandra with hexastylis, use *Hydrangea quercifolia* as an ornamental shrub and *Penstemon smallii* as a shady perennial. Then we returned back to the Inn for a brief rest, and on to the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill Botanical Garden. Here we were split into small groups and given an all-too-short look at several different facets of the work being done here, especially in wildflower rescue and propagation: a ten-minute look at the propagating area with another group hot on our heels as we moved to the carnivorous plant section and on through seven stations. After dinner, an interesting film, "The Natural Gardens of North Carolina," based on a book of the same title was shown. Then back to the Inn for the night following a rather full first day.

Sunday June 3 saw our departure from Chapel Hill. We were heading for Wilmington, N.C. with two stops along the way. The first stop was at Loleta Powell's nursery in Princeton, N.C. I have never seen so many different hostas in my life. Little ones, big ones, blue and chartreuse and green and striped. A display garden of perennials and hostas offered some nice planting combinations. When we got

back on the buses, I think some hostas came with us.

The second stop, at Jeff Spencer's Blueberry Farm, was the highlight of the trip so far. Forget the ticks and the chiggers about which we were all so paranoid. Forget the long bus ride. On the other side of the blueberry rows, in the cow pasture, were carnivorous plants growing wild. I had never before considered *Dionaea muscipula* (Venus Fly-trap) as a ground cover; that is how thickly it was growing. The Huntsman's Horns *(Sarracenia flava)* were growing in huge clumps. Each time I photogaphed one and turned around, there would be another, bigger, finer plant. Finally we were all shooed reluctantly back to the bus. As we left the town, we got to boo a gas station selling clumps of the sarracenia to tourists, nicely potted up in tomato juice cans.

On to Wilmington, leave luggage at the Hilton, and back into the bus to go to Cape Fear, the Fort Fisher Marine Resources Center. A well-produced film gave us some idea of the coastal habitat, fauna and flora of the Carolinas. We then had a brief period on the beach itself to explore the area. Back to the Hilton, a quick swim in the pool, dinner and a good night's rest.

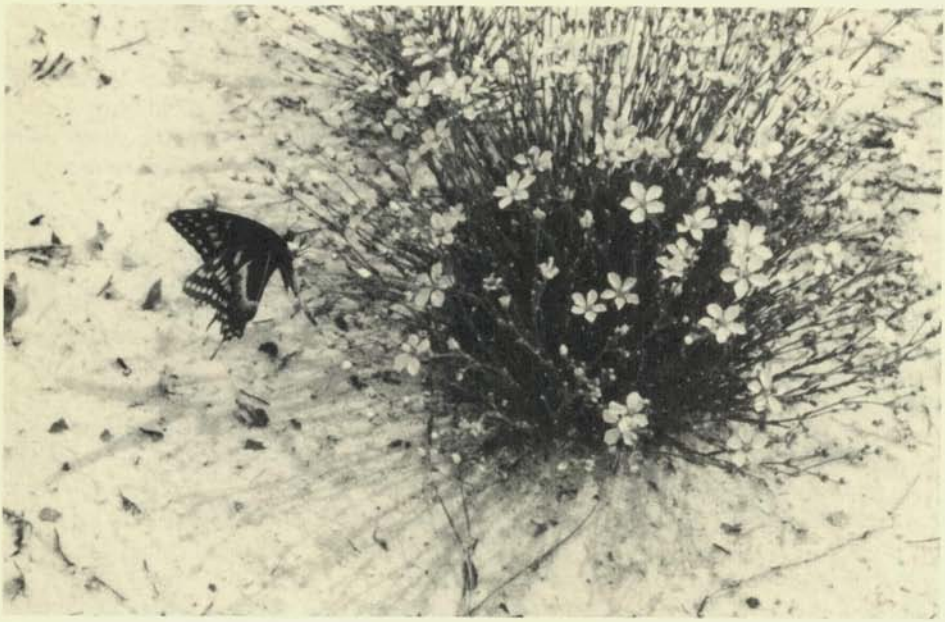
Monday June 4 was another alternate route day. "B" bus went first to Plantation Gardens. This was interesting not so much for the plant material as the concept: several adjoining neighbors were gardening in common; they give classes, hold programs, and work together in an informal manner. Such a cooperative effort, without legal strictures, is all too rare these days. The next stop was Orton Plantation. This is a traditional Southern plantation with white-columned house, Spanish Moss dripping from the Live Oaks and the Cypress Trees growing in a large pond with waterlilies. We enjoyed a pleasant picnic lunch outdoors under a huge oak covered with Resurrection Fern *(Polypodium polypodioides)*.

Afternoon was spent in the Green Swamp. It was hot. It was humid. There were ticks and chiggers. We didn't care. Botanically, for us, this was the richest area of the trip so far. A partial listing would include *Sarracenia minor, S. rubra, S. flava, S. purpurea* and natural hybrids, *Dionaea muscipula, Drosera intermedia, Cleistes divaricata, Calopogon pallidus.* Riches indeed.

Back to the Hilton, and this evening we were on our own for dinner. I had thought of soft shell crab, a sea food dinner. Sally Katkaveck had a better idea. We would get cold cuts and all the fixings and picnic by the pool. Great idea, but where would we get the food and how to carry it back to the hotel. No problem. We took the bus, the tour bus that is. It turns out that buses have to be washed out and off and that sort of thing (at the rear of the bus). So five of us went along with "B" bus.

Dionaea muscipula at the Spencer Blueberry Farm.
Judy Glattstein

Botanizing under Turkey Oaks in the Sand Hills.



Arenaria caroliniana, the Pine Barrens Sandwort.

Calopogon pallidus.
Judy Glattstein

Kalmia cuneata.
Judy Glattstein

While it was being swabbed out, I nearly lost at checkers. If it weren't for the coaching of our driver, an Olympic class checker player, things would not have gone well. On to a superette. Picture this! The bus pulls into the parking lot; each of us gets a section of the store and starts throwing things into the carts—plates and utensils, kitchen knives and napkins, and food; back to the bus, our driver lifts the doors to the luggage lockers beneath the bus, we stow our grocery bags and drive off. About twenty of us sat around the pool; some swam; some didn't; all ate and talked, of the trip, of plants, of gardens here and at home. I understand that those who went out had some really nice meals too. But no swim.

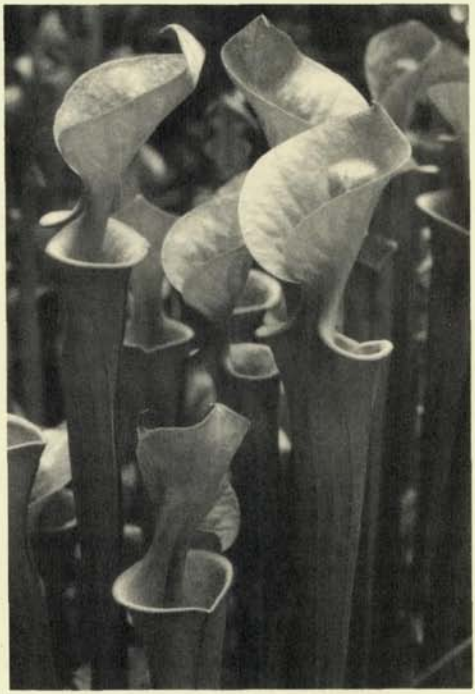
Tuesday June 5 went to the Sand Hills area. This is a very rigorous habitat. It is of white sand, glaring in the sun, with the plants growing in isolated pockets—the sun so intense that foliage is often held at an angle to reduce exposure. We saw some typical xerophytic plants such as opuntia and arenaria, and the rare White Wicky *(Kalmia cuneata)*. Bus "A" got stuck in the sand trying to turn around. I was delighted. It was the first time I was able to take my time photographing plants without the rest of the group passing me by and the group leader chivying me along. The bus was eventually pulled out with the aid of a truck or two and we were on our way again. The afternoon stop was at Clarenden Gardens. At one time this must have been a wonderful garden, planted and maintained with knowledge and affection. Jane Howe, widow of the man who created it, was sorry that we had to see it in its present condition. The current owners, a corporation, have done nothing in the way of maintenance for several years and the inevitable toll of such neglect is evident. Still, the magnificant trees and shrubs rise above the tangled weeds.

From here we drove to Pinehurst where we checked in at the Pinehurst Hotel. Great swimming pool, and I hear it has a very good golf course. It does have a magnificent cedar, *Cedrus deodara*. Dinner that night was pleasant and somewhat nostalgic as we knew it was the last night of the Pre-Conference Tour with only one day to go before the conference proper.

We departed in good time and stopped off at the Sandhills Community College to tour their holly collection. In the spirit of the moment the Japanese got photographed next to the Japanese holly, the British near the English hollies, a group of the Americans near *Ilex opaca*, and I tried to get the Norwegians to stand by a sign that said miscellaneous hollies, but no luck. It is a very complete collection of hollies, including both type plants and cultivars, with some very interesting named forms. Unfortunately, what will grow in North Carolina will not always grow in Connecticut, where I live and garden.

On to lunch at the University of North Carolina—Charlotte. A quick visit to the Van Landingham Glen, where there are some nice native plants growing in a woodland situation: *Aruncus dioicus*, a lovely patch of a mottled-foliaged *Hepatica triloba* var. *americana* mingling with the mottled leaves of *Hexastylis arifolia*, and *Rhododendron calendulaceum*. In the greenhouses I saw dishpans full of pots of sarracenia, some natural hybrids and some deliberate crosses made by Larry Mellichamp. Then on to Asheville and the conference.

For me, the appeal of the tour was varied. It is the people I met, to be sure. But it was especially gratifying to see types of habitats so totally unfamiliar to me, the Sandhills and the Green Swamp, and particularly the carnivorous plants of the coastal plain of North Carolina.



Sarracenia flava.
Joann Knapp

Post-Conference Tour: Treasures of the Blue Ridge

Nickolas Nickou
Branford, Connecticut

Those of us who participated in the Post-Conference Tour were treated to a more extensive chance to explore the flora of the Blue Ridge further than had been possible during the conference itself. Many of the plants we saw during the three-day jaunt into the mountains have become some of the choicer staples of the well-appointed rock or wildflower garden. In particular *Leiophyllum buxifolium* (Sand Myrtle) and *Fothergilla major* (Bottlebrush) come to mind. With a little attention to their wants they are easily grown and are certainly among the finest native plants we can grow.

The tour was expertly organized and led by Ruby D. Pharr, Professor of Botany at Western Piedmont Community College. She was ably assisted by a team of local experts. One day each was devoted to the Linville Gorge, Roan Mountain, and Bluff Mountain. Each location had something special about it, whether it be its plants, geology, scenery or a combination of all these.

My favorite at that time of year—June 12 to June 15—was the Linville Gorge. I'm sure that the other sites have great floral displays either earlier or later, but the four stars went to Linville Gorge at the time of our visit.

There is a fine view of the gorge from the western rim, but most of us chose to hike along the eastern rim from the base of Tablerock Mountain to the Chimneys. The main features were the sheer cliffs, free standing rock chimneys, the deep gorge itself and the hovering mountains in the background. Sand Myrtle draped dramatically over exposed ledges against a backdrop of *Rhododendron minus* while here and there were accents of Turkeybeard *(Xerophyllum asphodeloides)* in full bloom. Sand Myrtle can also be seen in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey and a close relative of Turkeybeard—Bear Grass *(Xerophylluma tenax)*—grows in spectacular masses in mountain meadows of our Northwestern states. The east wall of the gorge was a sheet of *Kalmia latifolia* in full bloom. Ruby pointed out the threatened Golden Mountain Heather *(Hudsonia montana)*. She is studying its numbers and distribution.

Roan Mountain was altogether different. It is one of the famous "balds" of the Southern Appalachians. Actually it is a series of rounded knobs covered by mountain grass *(Danthonia compressa)*. The trail went up and down but inexorably toward higher areas, which stand a bit more than 6,000 feet.

From a distance the mountain appears rather bare, but there is plenty to be seen. On all sides, fading into the distance, are tiers of blue ridges creating one of the finest views east of the Rockies. All around us were stands of rhododendrons and azaleas, but we were not there for the big show. One good-sized patch of Flame Azalea *(Rhododendron calendulaceum)* was in full bloom, but it was just a hint of what is to be seen other seasons. The Fraser Fir *(Abies fraseri)* was the dominant conifer and doing well in exposed areas. The Yellow Buckeye *(Aesculus octandra)* was common in the protection of the "hollows." We saw a number of non-blooming herbs including the famous Gray's Lily, but only the Creeping Bluets

Leader Arthur Smith on Roan Mountain.
Yoshio Furuhashi

Leiophyllum buxifolium on Jonas Ridge, Linville Gorge.
Judy Glattstein

(Houstonia serpyllifolia) were at their best. A few pure white, yellow-eyed beauties were scattered among the more usual blues.

Well-studied, well-described, and diligently protected is the Bluff Mountain Preserve. Casual and potentially destructive visits are not allowed. Visits are prearranged and guided by authorizèd personnel, either expert naturalists or student interns. Ruby Pharr has prepared a first-rate guide to the area with descriptions of the various habitats and plants associated with them. The widely different areas are generally referred to as communities, ie: flatrock community, Red Oak-White Oak community, Carolina Hemlock community and so forth. The commonest and also the most unusual plants of each community are illustrated in the margins by fine line drawings.

The Sugar Maple community at 4,300 feet was a touch of our Northeast with similar species of trees and shrubs found at much lower elevations in New England. Dominant, of course, was the Sugar Maple accompanied by Red Oak, White Oak, American Ash, Sassafras and others, but along with them was the Cucumber Tree *(Magnolia acuminata)* and climbing high into the trees was the vigorous vine, Dutchman's Pipe *(Aristolochia macrophylla)*. Nineteen stations are described in the guide and I do believe we saw all of them.

Quite unique was the Fen Stepping Stone Trail to the fen communities at 4,500 feet: a fragile easily disturbed area, and the guides were ever vigilant to nip any cross-country traipsing in the bud. This was a wet area with a nutrient-rich water source in contrast to the nutrient-poor bog. The geological creation of this community was well described. Some of the commonest plants were Grass of Parnassus *(Parnassia grandifolia)*, sundews, False Asphodel *(Tofieldia racemosa)* and Fir Club Moss *(Lycopodium selago)*.

Jonas Ridge, The Chimneys, Linville Gorge.
A.D. Schilling

In other areas it was great to see our old friend *Galax aphylla*, lining the trail edges, along with Golden Alexander, Carolina Phlox, Closed Gentian and *Iris cristata*. Near moist seeps and on shaded cliffs grew masses of Michaux's Saxifage *(Saxifraga michauxii)*. Nine Bark *(Physocarpus opulifolius)*, an old fashioned garden shrub rarely seen in gardens these days, was plentiful. More of a botanical oddity, but quietly attractive, were scattered plants of Fly Poison *(Amianthium muscaetoxicum)*. Here also the scenery was grand, but more impressive was the educational presentation of the unique features of this preserve.

After two nights in a college dormitory in Banner Elk, in the shadow of Grandfather Mountain, the tour ended up in Winston-Salem with an evening stroll through Old Salem, an early Moravian settlement, and a farewell dinner in Salem Tavern. My assessment of the Post-Conference Tour is completely complimentary.

Jonas Ridge, Linville Gorge.
A.D. Schilling

"Rock gardening will become a great institution here. Our hot, dry summer will not prevent rock gardening, but will give it a beautiful new American character. I am sure of it for two reasons. We have the spirit and we have the plants. We all want the best there is, and certainly there are no flowers more beautiful than alpines."

Wilhelm Miller, June 1909
Garden Magazine, New York

As It Was in the Beginning

The Origin and Roots of Rock Gardening in North America

Based on a talk given by Francis H. Cabot, Cold Spring, N.Y. at the Awards Dinner during the 50th Anniversary Celebration.

It is time to review our past and to remind ourselves of our origins as rock gardeners. By so doing we may gain a sense of perspective, a sense of our place today in the history of gardening and in rock gardening in particular.

We rock gardeners, namely those interested in alpine, subalpine, meadow, prairie, bog, coastal and woodland plants (the wildings, if you will, of our botanically diverse world), inherit the curiosity about plants and the fascination with their habits and morphology that spurred the early botanist, collectors and horticulturists to devote their lives to this intriguing pursuit, to the detriment for the most part of their own material well being.

As I see it, we share this very special passion, which is only understandable to those caught up in it, with a most interesting group of people. In effect we are part of a continuum that may go back a bit further than we thought and whose golden age may have been with us for some time.

Since the subject is a large one the focus of this talk will be on the beginnings to about World War II. The post 1940 story will have to wait for another time.

It is hard to conceive that in a world where humans and wildflowers coexisted that there were not always those special few who really cared and that then, as now, rock gardeners were just folks.

While Petrarch in 1336 had recorded the dazzling sweep of view, with the clouds beneath him and the rugged snow-capped Alps in the far distance, which rewarded his ascent of the peak of Mont Ventoux in the Vaucluse, it was Conrad Gessner, a Swiss, who first recorded his reaction to the glory of the mountains and their flora in the first half of the 16th Century and published the first account of alpine vegetation.

Dürer's masterful painting of *Primula vulgaris* dates from around 1500. Clusius records the cultivation of *Primula auricula* and the hybrid *Primula* × *pubescens*, parents of a garden auricula, from the Austrian Alps in 1583. It is a safe assumption that alpines were grown in pots from that time on and, in fact, Correvon quotes Paxton as saying that alpine plants had been cultivated in England since the 16th century.

Georg Dionysius Ehret's coloured drawings for Linnaeus, and his body colours and watercolours, were made for the most part in the 1730's and 40's. There is no record as to whether he traveled in the Alps but clearly he was interested in alpines. His *Gentiana verna* was painted in 1732 which was the same year that Haller's *Die Alpen* was published.

Up to this date we are told that mountainous landscapes were generally regarded with apprehension, even horror. As late as 1723 J. J. Scheuchzer of Zurich, one of the first scientific alpine travelers (memorialized by Linnaeus in the genus *Scheuchzeria)*, testified that mountains were "dangerous, forbidding, inhospitable places, with terrifying scenery, haunted by dragons and alpine spirits."

Haller changed all that when he described his trips through the Alps and contrasted the idyllic life of the mountaineers with the corrupt and decadent existence of the dwellers in the plains. His botanizing and collections on these trips were to lay the foundation for his *Flora of Switzerland.* Other influences were Rousseau's awakening of the romantic sensibilities

and the subtle effects of landscape and nature on the shifting state of the human soul as well as de Saussure's descriptions of his natural history rambles in the Alps around Geneva published in the 1770's. It was not too long thereafter that the plant life of the mountains became a novel and important interest to botanists and gardeners alike.

Mountainous landscapes were regarded with horror.

Sir William Chambers in his *Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* published in 1772 described the time-honoured use of rocks by the Chinese in their gardens, planted to advantage with a diversity of suitable plants.

While, at the close of the 16th century, Pierre Richer de Belleval constructed a large mound in the new botanic garden at Montpellier in the south of France with terraced beds, placing the plants from the Cevennes, Alps and Pyrenees in the topmost bed, the first big rock garden as such was probably that made in 1772/73 at the Chelsea Physic Garden. Forty tons of Portland limestone left over from the rebuilding of the Tower of London were combined with chalk flints and with some basaltic lava brought back from Iceland by Sir Joseph Banks to create a suitably rocky terrain. Chelsea at the time was being reorganized under the leadership of William Forsyth although credit for this early attempt to grow plants ecologically is usually given to William Curtis, the then Demonstrator of Plants to the Apothecaries Apprentices.

But it was two English doctors, in particular, who deserve the credit for sponsoring the first known expedition to collect alpine plants with a view to growing them on.

In 1762 Dr. John Fothergill, a Yorkshireman with a medical degree from Edinburgh, established a botanical garden at Upton House, West Hamm, then a village on the outskirts of London, which ultimately became internationally famous as he recieved plants from correspondents throughout the world. His garden contained a "wilderness" in which he experimented with foreign plants and he was probably the first botanist to study alpine plants scientifically and to grow them in Britain, though Fothergill's contemporary, Dr. William Pitcairn, originally from Fifeshire, who became one of London's most eminent physicians, established a botanical garden of five acres in what was then the rural area of Islington and shared the same interest.

In 1775 Fothergill and Pitcairn jointly commissioned Thomas Blaikie, a twenty-five year old from Edinburgh "to undertake a journey to the Alps and Switzerland in search of rare and curious plants." (One can see that we are indebted to the Scots for getting alpine gardening under way.)

There is no picture extant of Thomas Blaikie but, fortunately, he kept an extensive, detailed and entertaining diary, one of the best of the many epics written by plant collectors searching the mountains. (As a fledgling historian the only thing I am sure of is that if you would be remembered by posterity in horticultural circles you must write about your experiences.) Blaikie's trip lasted from April 13th to December 31st, 1775, when he returned

to London to dine with Fothergill. On November 25th he forwarded in one box from Bourdigny, near Geneva, 447 different plant species from the Alps and the Jura. The plants were indentified by collecting number and cross referenced by Haller's numbering system, a fact that pleased Voltaire (then 81 and living on the shores of Lake Geneva in exile from France) who met him on June 24th. On January 1st, he breakfasted with Sir Joseph Banks in his house in Soho Square (and to keep things in perspective let us not forget that Banks some nine years earlier had been collecting specimens in Newfoundland including a white form of *Primula mistassinica).* Blaikie then moved on to Fothergill's botanical garden at Upton to receive his shipment, which arrived on January 16th, and which he duly planted out, noting that there were very few species lost due to the fact that he had collected many plants of each species wherever possible. He also noted with pride that with the addition of *his* alpine plants Fothergill's plant collection in general was almost superior to any in England, Kew excepted.

Blaikie's diary records his very thorough rambles through the Alps and his emotional reaction to the plants. A hillside of *Rhododendron ferrugineum* in bloom moves him to quote:

"In the wild waste remote from human toil
There rocks bring forth and desolation smile
Here blooms the rose where human face ne'er shone
And spreads its beauty to the sun alone"

His diary also reflects a lively and observant character who made friends easily among all classes as he traveled in a new country. For his collecting he used the guiding services of Michel Piccard, who ten years later became the first to reach the summit of Mont Blanc, as well as the services of the Thomas family whose eldest member, aged a very sprightly 80, had guided Haller some 45 years before.

Young Blaikie is important in our history and while he spent the rest of his life in Europe doing landscape and gardening work for the French aristocracy (he was associated with the gardens of Bagatelle and the Petit Trianon and was an exponent of the Jardin Anglais to the French), it is fortunate that he wrote his diary since his sponsors, Drs. Fothergill and Pitcairn, took *all* the credit for the introduction of his plants, never once mentioning him.

By the end of the eighteenth century it was fashionable to take a walking tour in the Alps as exemplified by Alexander von Humboldt's trip in 1796 when the seeds were planted that were to culminate, after his South American expedition, in the monograph that developed the concept of the geography of plants, the changes in types and patterns of vegetation according to the climates in which they grow. This concept was dramatically demonstrated to Humboldt during his ascent of Chimborazo where, in the space of a few vertical miles, virtually all the climates in the world and a range of vegetation from the tropics to the Arctic were represented. Later he graphically illustrated this distribution in his novel plant-profile of Chimborazo, reproduced in his South American Atlas, laying thereby the firm foundation—the bedrock, so to speak—of the modern study of ecology.

While Catesby, Bartram and Michaux had been collecting throughout much of the Eighteenth Century in eastern America it was not until 1805, about the time Humboldt was climbing Chimborazo, that Capt. Meriwether Lewis and his botanist companion Capt. Wm. Clark, traversing the new lands acquired from France under the Louisana Purchase, found the Bitter Roots that gave the mountain range its name.

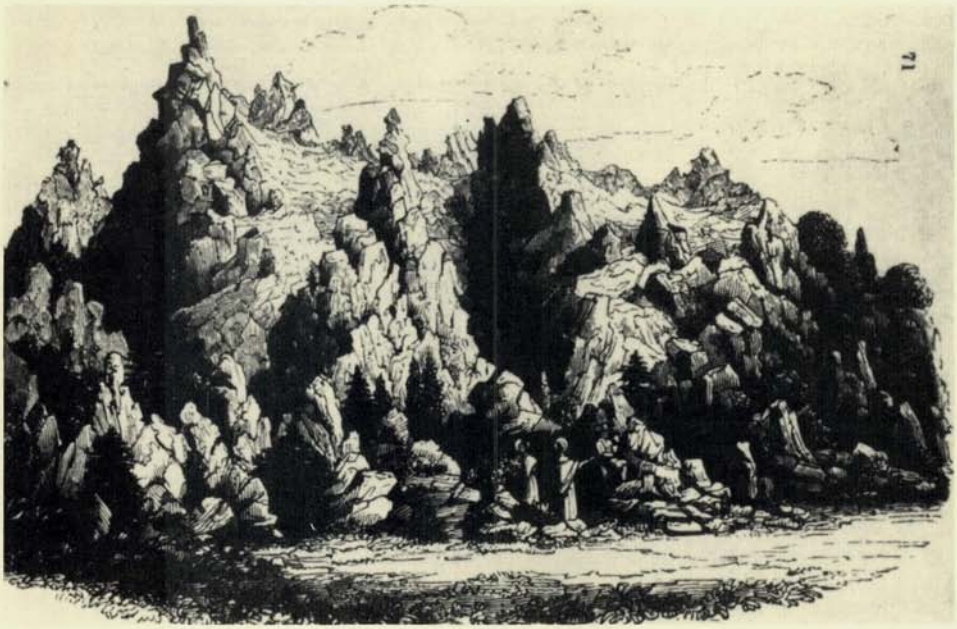
In 1812 Thomas Nuttall introduced *Oenothera caespitosa,* among others, from the Midwest and in 1822 went on to become curator of Harvard's Botanic Garden in Cambridge, leaving the job in

1835 because he couldn't resist the chance to collect plants in Oregon. Nuttall collected and introduced hundreds of American species. He sounds like a real plantsman—his French Canadian boatmen referred to him as 'Le Fou' (the crazy one) because of his predeliction to botanize when Indians were chasing them, and the sailors on the 'Alert,' according to Henry Dana in *Two Years before the Mast,* referred to their fellow passenger on the trip back east as 'Old Curious.' Clearly he was a kindred spirit.

By the 1830's the growing of alpines in pots was sufficiently common for Paxton's *Magazine of Botany* to recommend under the headings of Operations for October (Cold Frames, Pits, etc.) "The various kinds of alpine plants should be removed to their winter quarters and introduced into the cold frame or pit, where a dry floor has previously been made with coal ashes, or old tan. . . . give them abundance of air, but always keep the lights over the plants in wet or damp weather."

Good advice, since English gardeners were finding out that raising alpine plants was not all that easy. Paxton, commenting that "The era is, we trust, not far distant, when alpine plants will be esteemed and cultivated to the full extent their simple but cheerful beauty deserves," mentions the Messrs. Young in Epsom "who have set a spot apart in their nursery solely for the growing of alpines. . . In the prosecution of their efforts, every species which time alone, and not lack of interest, has thrown into comparative oblivion, is sought out and cherished with the most zealous care." Seeds collected in the mountains were germinating well for the Youngs as evidenced by a Paxton illustration of *Gentiana gelida* whose seeds were originally received from Siberia in 1807 via the Glasgow Botanic Garden.

John Ruskin, in his teens, was writing rapturously about the glories of alpine meadows, particularly fields of gentians in the Jura, and the books of the first great Russian author, Lermontov, about life in



Lady Broughton's Rockwork at Hoole House, Chester.

the Caucasus, were the rage. His romantic and well illustrated visions of these mountains, such as his view of the Darial Valley, the home of *Primula darialica,* near Kazbek, may have been an influence in the then latest fashions of the English aristocracy in creating rockeries, grottoes and caverns on their wide-ranging landscaped grounds, as exemplified by Lady Broughton's rock work at Hoole House, Chester as seen from the center of the flower garden. Lady Broughton recreated a Swiss valley in its entirety with the snow-covered summits and glaciers being represented in white spar covered with dwarf plants, trees and shrubs. The illusion, to a spectator standing in the valley, was said to be wonderfully striking and complete.

Paxton, in the 1830's, began a trend that continues to this day, namely the effort to encourage good landscape sense. He says:

"To bring on a lawn contiguous to the house, piles of rocks which represent the most truly natural features in spots on which the hand of man has never been employed, or over which, perhaps, his foot has never trod, is, by eminence, entitled to be regarded as one of the most monstrous infringements on taste."

He advocated seclusion for "Rockeries" (which he felt were by far the most practical setting in which to grow rock or mountain plants, and which he recommended to his readers who "may rest assured of an immediate recompense in the great delight and gratification which the accession of so interesting and ornamental a feature will afford"). He advocated seclusion for Rockeries since, on the one hand, the beholder needed to be near them to detect their beauty as they were too indistinct to be attractive if one had to view them over a spacious foreground, and, on the other, they do not mix and combine harmoniously with the other features of a pleasure garden. All too true. Paxton hoped his strictures, which he had deliberately *not* illustrated with "well-known objectionable examples," will at the least direct notice to the absurdities that have been perpetrated in the way of rock gardens and will induce gardeners to attempt something more worthwhile. No subject, he feels, in the gardening profession requires more skill or talent than creating a naturalistic rockery.

It is unclear whether A.J. Downing intended this illustration from his *Treatise* to show well-executed rock work or a barbarous mélange.

Well the English weren't the only ones who were creating absurdities. Andrew Jackson Downing, emulating Paxton, was warning his American readers in 1841 that "on a tame and sandy level, where rocks of any kind are unknown, their introduction in rockworks nine times in ten, is more likely to give rise to emotions of the ridiculous, than those of the sublime or picturesque."

Downing did approve of Lady Broughton's extravaganza, however, and felt that well-executed rockwork that had a natural and harmonious expression was highly pleasing. On the other hand a barbarous *mélange* or confused pile of stones filled with dwarfish plants had best not be attempted unless the creator is sufficiently an artist imbued with the spirit of nature to be able to produce something other than a caricature of her works.

In 1835 at Lilienfeld in the Oberwienerwald of Lower Austria, Father V. Gottwald, a priest at the Lilienfeld Monastery, and the physician, Dr. Lorenz, planted their collections of alpine plants in calcareous soil on neat small rocky terraces in the cloister garden. The purpose was to display the mountain flora to the casual visitor. Anton Kerner von Marilaun was dutifully impressed at the age of 17 to see these plants growing shortly after returning from his first climb to the high Alps above the tree line in 1849 on the Hochschwab in Upper Steiermark. But he was discouraged to learn that, "after the first winter the plants would start to sprout full of hope only to go to sleep during the summer, never to wake up again." (Sounds familiar, doesn't it?)

It was not until later, after much trial and error, that Kerner, an ardent field botanist and keen observer with a strong aesthetic sense, figured it out and created his successful alpinum in the Botanic Garden at

The Rockery at Pelham Priory, New York—Wm. Rickarby Miller—1854—New-York Historical Society.

Innsbruck with the plantings in scree conditions segregated according to the valleys of the Tyrol. He also established alpine research gardens at elevations of five, six and seven thousand feet. His book, *The Cultivation of Alpine Plants,* was published in 1864.

It was about this time that Sir Joseph Hooker, prior to his association with Kew, was exploring the valleys below Kanchenjunga and bringing back new found treasures.

It was in 1863 that William Robinson, then a Foreman in the Royal Botanic Society's Garden, Regents Park, was entranced by the collection of 120 saxifrage species in the Hull Botanic Garden's rock garden and thrilled by the Alpine Rockery in the famous Backhouse Nurseries in York, "where the *Eritrichium nanum* was thriving as if on its native Ben Lawers and where species *Cyclamen* combined well with a carpet of *Gentiana verna,* Bee Orchids, *Primula farinosa* and beautifully hardy *Cypripediums* from North America and Siberia." Little wonder that the true plantsman within him was turned on and that he spent much of his spare time as a young man exploring the Lake District for alpines with young James Backhouse and, ultimately, the Alps themselves in the summer of 1868.

In 1870 at the age of 32, William Robinson determined to come to America. (Incidentally this was the year James McNab installed the first Rock Garden at Edinburgh.) While it may be that he came to explore the West for alpine plants it is more likely that he came to the States to seek funds to start his magazine, *The Garden.* His target was his father, a land agent, who had abandoned his family in Ireland early in William's childhood by running off to San Francisco with none other than Lady St. George, the wife of his employer. (The gold rush of 1848 may have been the catalyst in this instance.) Financed by an aunt, William Robinson and his brother traveled to San Francisco in 1870, tracked down their father, demanded money and returned well off. The shrewd investment of a portion of his newly acquired nest egg in London real estate resulted in his being able to acquire Gravetye Manor in due course.

His reaction to New York City was a strong one. He considered it "the most disagreeable and filthy city I have ever seen." Central Park, however, was one of the best parks he had ever seen, better than those in England. Not all of it pleased the plantsman within him however:

> "The history of gardening to a great extent is the history of its sufferings at the hands of architects and sculptors. These have invariably used gardens to display their own wares not nature's. Few will dispute it is nature and not useless, objectless, second rate and costly architecture we want in our public gardens. In the Central Park as much money has been spent on useless work of this kind as would have created another park without needless embellishments."

Robinson left the hubbub of New York for Boston, so as to meet Asa Gray and obtain introductions from him to Dr. Albert Kellogg, who was to show him the mountain plants of the Sierras, and Henry Nicholas Bolander, the German born state botanist of California. His trip took place too late in the autumn to get more than a feel of what it might be like in summer, but he was thrilled to find *Darlingtonia californica.*

Frederic Law Olmsted had spent the mid-1860's in California representing a mining company and his glimpse of Yosemite in 1864 was what spurred him to push for its preservation as a national park. He and Robinson became friends and at a later date he sent 38 different kinds of American trees for Robinson to plant at Gravetye.

The horticultural connection with Great Britain was then, as now, a very close one and the grandeur of the West was compelling. In 1877 in La Veta Pass, Colorado, a camping party consisted of Sir Joseph Hooker, Asa Gray, Mrs. Gray (who had captivated Robinson), and various others.

It was in 1877 also that Henri Correvon first showed a collection of alpines at a horticultural show in Geneva. *"Jardin alpin - herbe à lapins* was the initial reaction—"Alpine plants are food for rabbits."

Henri Correvon credits an old friend of his, the daughter of Professor Agassiz at Harvard, as being the first to acclimatize alpine rhododendrons, gentians and edelweiss in 1872 near Boston, a practice soon emulated by her neighbors.

So it is not surprising that the first great rock garden in North America was created in the environs of Boston in the 1880's. What is surprising is that this garden, which is still intact, is so little known to present day enthusiasts. The garden was created by General Stephen Minot Weld who had served with distinction in the Union Army, and who from the age of 40 to his late 70's devoted much of his energies and hard earned wealth to creating a great woodland garden among superb rock outcrops on his 52 acres in Dedham. His house was centered on the property and over the years was encircled by woodland walks and man-made ponds and lakes to which water was piped from a dam created two miles away to spill out from a cleft in a rock. General Weld's interest in and love of wildflowers is apparent in his Diary of the War Years. (He entered as a 2nd Lieutenant and emerged four years later as a General at the ripe old age of 24)! It is not known whether he had landscape advice as he developed the property or not. While he was a friend of Charles Sargent of the Arnold Arboretum and presumably knew Olmsted as well, the presumption is that *he* designed and developed his property over the years. He became President of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society in 1907 and it was noted that his family connection with the Society went back over 80 years.

In 1920 after General Weld's death, Mary Northend described his garden as "one of the most striking examples extant of that art which conceals art. Into nooks and crannies. . . are unexpected effects so cunningly contrived that the flowers seem to have been there since the world began. Yet it is material gathered from all quarters of the globe and blended with native varieties; and thus the groups are studies in botany as well as finished pictures."

He started with eastern American wildflowers and soon began to import plants from England and the continent. Correvon's *Les Plantes des Alpes* was published in 1884 and we know that, subsequently, Correvon visited Rockweld and consulted on the question of how to grow alpines.

Rockweld exists today in Dedham as Endicott House, where Sloane Fellows from MIT do their serious thinking. The house has been changed beyond recognition but the rocks and woodlands and ponds, now 100 years old, are still there, remarkably intact despite more than fifty years of benign neglect. It would be a relatively small matter to clear the paths through the tangle of rhododendrons and to open this gem of a large-scale wild garden to the interested public and consideration is being given to doing just that. General Weld would be pleased. A creative, imaginative and tireless person, his love of flowers furnished the most constant source of his recreation.

General Weld was presumably one of many who were discovering the fascination of mountain plants and rock gardens, especially if they were fortunate enough to live in the mountains of our American West. Clarice Nye who lived in southern Oregon recorded a visit to Iron Creek Mountain in the Siskyous in 1890 when she saw and collected her first *Lewisia cotyledon,* making a rock garden for it on the north side of her house. It is probably safe to assume that in North America our spiritual antecedents and the mountain plants that we love had found and enjoyed one another from their earliest confrontation.

In Europe the last half of the Nineteenth Century saw an explosion of interest in rock gardens and alpine plants. In addi-

tion to the many floras that had been available, popular descriptive texts were being issued in English, French and German. Kerner's 1864 book stimulated the interest of lowlanders and an alpinum appeared in almost every botanical garden worth its salt. Many of these gardens constructed alpine garden field stations at higher altitudes and a great many private gardens were created at the same time. Sendtner, a German banker, built an extensive collection which ended up as the core of the alpine collection in the Botanic Garden at Munich.

Sündermann published the first treatise on how to make a scree, *Alpenwiese und Gerollfeld* (Alpine Meadow and Scree) in 1889 and Max Kolb, the director at Munich, published his book, *The European and Overseas Alpine Plants* in 1890 describing his success in growing the difficult cliff dwellers, such as the aretian androsaces and phyteumas, which had been ungrowable in Kerner's time.

Erich Wocke in dem von ihm erbauten alpinum in Königlich Kaiserlich Botanische Garten zu Berlin—1898.

Erich Wocke of the Zurich Botanic Garden published his book on growing alpine plants in the lowland garden in 1898 and typified the dashing image of the alpine plantsman in that peaceful and happy moment "in dem von ihm erbauten alpinum im Königlich Kaiserlich Botanische Garten zu Berlin."

The 1890's in England were filled with equally exciting developments. The Rev. Henry Jardine Bidder designed and built the rock garden at St. John's College Oxford in 1893. His purpose was the growing of the alpine plants rather than the creation of a natural alpine garden. A clever, knowledgeable gardener, he was said to have a particularly forthright personality likely to daunt those without comparable knowledge. Ellen Willmott and Reginald Farrer passed muster, however, and were inspired by his work. The latter in fact, who had at the age of fourteen already rebuilt a rock garden in his parents' Yorkshire Garden in Ingleborough Fell, worked with Bidder on the construction at Oxford.

This is not the moment to delve into Farrer's extraordinary career and idiosyncrasies, something best left to his biographer who I hope is working somewhere to this end, but it is worth glimpsing his world and his contemporaries briefly for the flavor of it all.

Clarence Elliott and E.A. Bowles, of course, accompanied Farrer to the Alps in 1910 on the trip later celebrated in *Among the Hills*. Elliott had started his Six Hills Nursery in 1907 after apprenticing at the Backhouse Nurseries.His contribution to the rock garden world was perhaps as great as that of any other figure. He pioneered the trough garden, the use of tufa, the alpine lawn, was a founding member of the AGS and a noted writer. Walter Ingwersen started his horticultural life as an apprentice at Six Hills Nursery before establishing his own nursery at William Robinson's Gravetye Manor. 'Gussie' Bowles, was, of course, a legendary figure. His generous ways and Nineteenth

Century lifestyle were a constant that never failed him and he seemed to get along with everybody. Each of these individuals are a long and good story in themselves.

After doing the European Alps, Farrer was ready for bigger and more exotic game and all of us must have read by now the marvelous descriptions of his travels in China and Tibet. Abetted by his friend and traveling companion, William Purdom, Farrer's legacy surrounds the present day rock gardener, not only in the plants that he introduced such as *Primula sonchifolia* but in those whose only trace in the West as yet lie in his beautiful paintings of such as *Lilium hyacinthimum, Primula agleniana,* and *Nomocharis basilissa.* Both Purdom and Farrer died young, at the ages of 41 and 40 respectively, in China.

But what a lift Farrer gave to the horticultural world and how he loved to call a spade a spade as in the case when he used his preface to Bowles' *My Garden in Spring* to disparage indirectly the efforts of one Frank Crisp, who achieved a baronetcy in 1913, to recreate the Alps in his garden replete with alabaster Matterhorn in the background, alpine hut and tin chamois perched on the rocks in his garden at Friar Park, Henley. Crisp, who was strangely proud of his version of Lady Broughton's folly, took umbrage and, since Farrer had conveniently departed for China, heaped his scorn on poor Bowles who was really an innocent bystander. There always have been and presumably always will be a number of schools of thought about the relationship between the rocks and the plants in a rock garden. But enough of England and the Continent and let's head back to America and our own immediate roots.

On the way we should note that women gardeners had been engaged at Kew in the mid-1890's where, in 1896, their bloomers caused such consternation and excitement that it was decreed that henceforth they were to wear britches. In 1901 Mrs. Edward G. Low founded the Lowthorpe School in Groton, Massachusetts, which gave a three year course in Landscape Architecture for women. This was followed in 1910 by Miss Jane B. Haines' founding of The School of Horticulture for Women at Ambler, Pennsylvania, which offered two years of practical training in all facets of horticulture.

Henry Correvon never ceased to be amazed by the influence and energy of women in America. He marveled at the organization and power of the garden club system and how the women of a given city could achieve almost anything they set their minds to. Such things didn't happen in Europe.

Louise Beebe Wilder.

One woman whose influence and horticultural talents knew no bounds in America was Louise Beebe Wilder. Her first love was rock gardening, which she began in the Ramapo Hills of Rockland County, New York in 1908 and continued after moving to a one-acre site in Bronxville a few years later. The first of her many books about her garden was published in

1916 and the last in 1937. In addition she wrote article after article after article in the horticultural press. Her books and articles are comprehensive, detailed and of great interest and practicality and they are as applicable to the rock gardening of the 1980's as they were in the first quarter of this century. She grew everything and shared her experiences and conclusions in lucid and graceful prose, an inspiration to her readers in North America.

Clarence Lown of Poughkeepsie was considered the dean of American rock gardeners at the turn of the century and he and Wilder were close horticultural friends, as was Herbert L. Durand, Wilder's neighbor in Bronxville, who embellished the rock outcropping on his property with wildflowers.

Unfortunately Lown was a very private person so there is little that we know about him and not much more about his garden, but it must have been a very special garden, a plantsman's garden where the individual plant took preeminence over the garden as a whole, a mecca for lovers of rock plants. The plants came first and were growing healthily in the right conditions and the degree of interest caused by the exceptional plants precluded one from taking in the garden as a whole for fear of missing a treasure. Mrs. Wilder wrote a loving tribute to her friend Clarence Lown in the *House and Garden* of October 1927 entitled "A Great Gardener and his Garden" and it is worth stopping a minute with them both in Lown's garden and hearing what she says.

Lown, whom she describes as the Nestor of American rock gardening—that is its Dean or oldest practitioner—had invited her to come to Poughkeepsie to see his plants. Her first visit was like walking out of the desert of ignorance into an oasis radiant with all she had sought for years. That day, her burning vision of how she wished to build a rock garden became a reality as she was introduced by Lown to his plants as if each had a definite living personality. She describes the approach to the house on a quiet street overhung by fine trees and the curious thing that happened to you as soon as you walked back into the garden,—"as if in a fairy tale your back begins to crook as you come upon numerous low rocky beds filled with the most inestimable treasures never thereafter to straighten up until you find yourself saying reluctant farewells."

Clarence Lown described himself as a plant hunter since childhood (which must reach back to the 1860's) searching the woods and fields and always growing native plants. From this base he brought in quantities of plants from abroad, establishing an incomparable collection of saxifrages, androsaces, campanulas and gentians, (his favorite); some 1500 species in all, which Mrs. Wilder felt was a modest estimate. She characterized him as the most modest and retiring of men, "who neither mounts the lecture platform nor is garrulous with his pen." (Speakers and writers take heed.) Yet an amazing amount of enlightenment and stimulation found its way from his gardens to other gardens through his disciples who follow his example, spread his precepts and owe him their inspiration "a debt that can only be repaid by the earnestness and sincerity with which we carry on his great work."

Clarence Lown.

Clarence Lown had a profound influence on other plantsmen of his day. One such was P.J. Van Melle, a cantankerous and articulate enthusiast who ran an alpine nursery in Poughkeepsie. Van Melle chose the Lown garden as his ideal and, after Lown's death in 1931, would write notes about the plants within it for the benefit of the horticulturally interested. He would cite it as well as the best example of the plantsman's, as opposed to the landscaper's, rock garden in the continuing arguments that raged in the horticultural press of the 20's and 30's about this important aesthetic question.

Another plantsman who shared Lown's passion was Montague Free, who was appointed head gardener at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden in 1914. Free had spent three years as a sub-foreman in the alpine section at Kew and came to the U.S. originally to work at the School of Horticulture for Women in Ambler, Pennsylvania. In the spring of 1916 he built BBG's rock garden, the first of its kind in a public garden or park in the United States. By 1918 with the help of a number of gift plants from Clarence Lown, he could proudly boast of 600 species growing in it despite the unfortunate glacial boulders uncovered in the course of grading operations on other parts of the grounds with which they *had* to make do. He also rather poignantly notes that "Many of our rare plants have been stolen almost immediately after being set out (apparently we have a connoisseur of alpine plants in our midst), and in some cases our entire stock of some plants has been lost in this way." Such is the lot of those who undertake to educate the public! In 1931 BBG published a 55 page guide to the rock garden written by Montague Free.

Montague Free.

Free lived, at least on weekends, near Poughkeepsie which seems to have been rather a mecca for the knowledgeable plantsmen of that era. He was not only a writer of superb books for the beginning gardener but an enthusiatic promoter of alpine plants and rock gardening throughout his life. In fact he was the first President of the American Rock Garden Society.

The profusion of articles on alpines and rock gardening in the American horticultural press in the first third of the Twentieth Century is nothing short of staggering especially to those of us who naively believe that we are just discovering the great diversity of plants that can be grown in the rock garden.

A wonderful publication called *The Garden Magazine* which ran from the early 1900's to 1928 ran a comprehensive article entitled "Alpine Flowers of Easiest Cultivation - How to carpet bare rocks and roadside ledges with flowers that only need a pinch of soil," as early as 1906. The article featured the rock garden at Smith College, which had been built in 1890 by Robert Cameron, a graduate of Kew, as well as illustrating "the sort of rock garden where alpines will not grow." But the subject really seems to have caught on after rock gardens were exhibited in a New York Flower Show in 1915. Then, article after article appeared, written primarily by the Scotch, English and European gardeners working on the great estates of the newly rich Americans, describing how they were reproducing the rock gardens

that they had been exposed to during their apprenticeship and training. It turned out that there were rock gardens everywhere, particularly where there was money. J.J. Huss created an effective valley bed of rock plants on the J.J. Goodwin estate on Asylum Road in Hartford and there was a shade garden to boot. Some took advantage of natural outcroppings as in the case of the J.F. Detmer estate in Tarrytown. And some were better than others. A great many articles appeared on how to build the right sort of aesthetically pleasing rock garden and successful results were featured as in the case of John McLaren's 1915 waterfall in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco where the photographer's caption reads, "Should not gardening be classified as a profession, a science and an art?" Hear, hear! And then there were illustrations of a "type of rock garden presenting a wild garden effect in which many varieties not truly alpine are grown." A masterful bit of discreet understatement given the appearance of the garden. Offsetting this, someone somewhere created a rock garden planted only with dwarf conifers photographed in 1909; not a bad idea at all.

One of the key early figures in good rock garden landscaping was Richard Rothe of Glenside, Pennsylvania, a landscape and rock garden enthusiast who found himself surrounded by a host of Philadelphia clients who were spending their millions on mansions and gardens. In 1915 he created the John Wanamaker garden at Lindenhurst in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania and, a bit later, the Rodman Wanamaker garden nearby. There were rock gardens for the Morrises, Elkins, Hechschers and any number of other prosperous Philadelphians. Rothe operated the Glenside Hardy Flower Gardens Nursery, which had a wonderful display rock garden and his work and writings influenced individuals to build their own gardens. Well, at least some individuals.

The original caption on this 1915 photograph of J.J. Goodwin's Hartford rock garden read, "The Harmony of Color is indescribable".

Others independently and proudly did their own thing as in the case of a garden on Montgomery Avenue in Ardmore. Maybe this is what Louise Beebe Wilder was referring to when she wrote "Sometimes one can't see the garden for the rocks."

In and around Boston there was a similar, if less publicized trend. A Mrs. H.L. Higginson of Manchester, Massachusetts (the former Miss Agassiz and friend of Correvon) was said to have the best and largest private alpine garden in America in 1910. In 1914 the Thomas Proctors had a private arboretum on 3,000 acres in Topsfield, Massachusetts, rivaling Arnold Arboretum, which included a magnificent rock garden. The rock garden was an attraction of engrossing interest for the advanced horticulturist and plant lover.

The plantings in General Weld's garden, discussed earlier in this talk, were described in detail by one Thomas Cole in 1915 in a paper read before the Boston Branch of the National Association of Gardeners and later published in the *Gardener's Chronicle of America.* The concept of the Alpine House as a solution for growing the choicer alpine plants in America was first mentioned in 1915 and described in detail in 1918. Then, as now, very few chose to build one.

W.M. Anderson established a field of heather on the Bayard Thayer Estate in Lancaster, Massachusetts emulating his native Scottish Highlands. The U.K. influence ran strongly throughout the American rock gardening scene and illustrations would be featured such as one of Sir Herbert Maxwell of Monteith among his *Cardiocrinum,* showing Americans what to strive for.

Both the Lowthorpe and Ambler Schools gave courses in rock gardening and American gardeners were becoming increasingly aware of the treasures that lay in their western mountains. Professor S.A. Pammell of Ames, Iowa wrote a series in 1908

"Sometimes one can't see the garden for the rocks."
Ann Wertsner Wood

in *Horticulture* called "Rocky Mountain Rambles" describing the beauty and botanical diversity. At one point he met Thomas Howell who with Tweedy had found *Lewisia tweedyi,* which Asa Gray had originally thought was a *Calandrinia,* on the dry side of the Wenatchees in the late 1880's. Howell was a farmer botanist.

Plant hunting trips were as eagerly anticipated and as rewarding to their participants then as now, if their style has changed a bit. Inspired by the plant hunting trips of E.A. Bowles and other enthusiasts in the Alps and Pyrenees, Herbert Durand organized the *House and Garden* Plant Exploring Expedition into the "flowered Rockies of Colorado" together with Dana Andrews in the late 1920's and wrote extensively about it for his horticulturally-minded readers. And there seem to have been no end of good alpine and wildflower nurseries to meet the demand. The Kelseys started their wildflower nursery in Highlands, North Carolina in the 1870's. In 1910 Thomas McAdam wrote in *Garden Magazine* that there were a dozen men around the country collecting native plants including "one in Vermont, one in Massachusetts, one in New Jersey, one in North Carolina (presumably the Kelseys), one in Colorado (presumably Dana Andrews in Boulder), one in Salt Lake, Purdy in California and a Georgian." Correvon refers to Wolcott's Nursery at Jackson, Michigan which was founded in 1913. Charles R. Serjeantson grew alpine plants and sold them in the Victoria Public Market as early as 1912 and J. Croft-Bennett operated an alpine nursery at Cowichan Bay on Vancouver Island after World War I. The activities of these two gentlemen soon prompted the organization of the British Columbia Alpine Plant Grower's Association in 1921, the forerunner of the Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society, the first society devoted to alpines in North America. (Mark December 7, 1996 on your calendars for the celebration of its 75th anniversary.)

Many collected on their own. In 1912 C.F. Ball and Herbert Cowley (who may have been New York estate gardeners) visited Bulgaria and under the aegis of Mr. Delmard, the Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Bulgaria, collected *Primulas minima, frondosa* and *decorum, Soldanellas pusilla* and *minima* and an assortment of Dianthus, Saxifraga, Gentiana and Campanula. They probably visited the famous rock garden of Count Silva Tronca in Pruhonitz, Czechoslovakia en route.

John Heckner, a government surveyor, came to southern Oregon from Australia, from which he is said to have departed suddenly. His work introduced him to plants which he brought back to Brownsboro, Oregon where he started a nursery in the 1920's. (Later he moved to Jacksonville, Oregon.) His 1933 list includes a marvelous collection of native plants from Oregon and Northern California interspersed with sensible admonitions on how to grow them.

Distraught over the death of his wife, from a ruptured appendix, he wrote a letter to the editor of the local newspaper which was published on the front page to the effect he planned to kill himself and that it would do no good to look for him. Many years later his body was found in the Siskiyous surrounded by the flowers that he loved.

Other plant enthusiasts led less dramatic lives but nevertheless succeeded in leaving something behind them for their fellow enthusiasts.

Carl Krippendorf spent over 50 years embellishing Lob's Wood, his woodland garden in Clermont Country outside of Cincinnati, now the Cincinnati Nature Center. Growing over 6,000 varieties of narcissi and acres of *Lycoris squamigera,* he corresponded with gardeners around the world. It is thanks to Elizabeth Lawrence, who wrote so feelingly about him in *The Little Bulbs,* that we know something

about his gardening ways. Miss Lawrence is one of ARGS' earliest members and a great gardener and gardening author. She has moved from her garden in Raleigh to Charlotte and we only wish she could have been with us tonight.

Henry Francis duPont was busy developing his family's place at Wintherthur over the same period, sharing Mr. Krippendorf's devotion to bulbs and to the grand scale of garden development. Both became members of ARGS and had rock garden features in their gardens but neither was active in the society.

One magazine which did alpines and rock gardening up proud was *House and Garden*, under the aegis of Richardson Wright. Riding the crest of the post World War I euphoria in America, an average issue ran over 200 pages and chronicled how the wealthy were spending their money on their houses and grounds. Emily Post on the other hand was telling people how to behave. *House and Garden's* regular contributors on horticulture included Ernest Wilson, Louise Beebe Wilder and Herbert Durand and in the 1920's it was not uncommon to find twenty pages of an issue devoted to rock gardening, alpine plants and wild flowers. Rock gardening had become the *fashionable* way to garden!

Correvon certainly had put his finger on it when he identified the women of America as those deserving the credit for its rock gardening progress.

Ann Wertsner Wood, who is hale and hearty in Lima, Pennsylvania today, wrote the first article on rock gardens that was illustrated in color in the *Ladies Home Journal* in 1928. A graduate of the Ambler School, the then Ann Wertsner worked with the Haughtons as they developed a great rock garden on their rocky hillside in Paoli by the banks of Valley Creek which ran past the lovely old grist mill on the property. Kitty Haughton was the designer and planter of the garden and Ann Wood remembers Mr. Haughton working with the rocks in the creek so

Jenny Butchart's garden in 1922. The caption read, "Where Woman's Wit and Nature's Will have Worked in Unison".

that it would make just the right sound. Correvon was captivated by the Haughton garden, which is unchanged today, at least in outline, even if only a few of the rock plants survive.

On the Pacific Coast a Mrs. Stoker, who came to Vancouver Island in 1901 and was an expert gardener, built one of the first rock gardens on the island near Cowichan Lake, sending her husband, a medical doctor, out scouring the hills for *Phlox diffusa* and the like. On the same island Jenny Foster Kennedy Butchart had the vision and energy to recycle the cement fortune acquired by her husband as a result of excavating the sand and shale at Tod Inlet, by turning the deep gash left behind into a great rock garden setting (aided and abetted by Charles Serjeantson, of Victoria). Ecology in reverse if you will, ending up as a serendipitously profitable tourist trap to boot. In the 1920's, the interpreters of the Pacific Coast and the Pacific Northwest as a plant paradise were virtually all women: Else Frye of Seattle, a prolific writer whose Green Pastures Gardens Nursery offered a superb list of Ericaceae. She was one of the founders of the ARGS on the West Coast. Other great plantsmen were Lester Rowntree of Carmel, one of the tireless plant hunters who is a story unto herself; Edith Banghart of Medina, Washington, who celebrated her 100th birthday last summer in Seattle; and A.W. Anderson McCully of Port Blakely, Washington who extolled the beauty of the mountain flora of the Pacific Northwest; all were women writers who brought alive the joys of gardening with alpines in that sublimely salubrious climate for plants.

This was no less the case in the East. Mrs. L. Stuyvesant Chanler, the wife of a future Lieutenant Governor of New York decided that her young husband was not suitably educated and moved her family lock, stock and barrel to a house called Gog Magog near Norfolk, England, in the 1890's from which he could commute to Cambridge University. In the process she became passionately devoted to alpines and when she returned home proceeded to make rock gardens, first in Tuxedo Park, New York and then later in Huntington, Long Island. Other devoted rock gardeners were Mrs. Charles Stout of Summit, New Jersey, who gardened intensively and was responsible for preparing an illustrated lecture on rock gardening complete with glass slides and a syllabus to be used by curious novices. Many of the slides were photographs of her garden. Florens Debevoise of Green Farms, Connecticut created Cronamere Nurseries, which was the very model of an English Alpine Nursery. And of course there was Mrs. Houghton.

If Philadelphia had wrested the rock gardening mantle of leadership from Boston in the first two decades of the century, it was now Boston's turn to reassert itself in the person of Martha Houghton and her extraordinary and beautiful garden in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. Martha Houghton started building her rock garden in 1907 and by the twenties it was renowned. Possessed of great energy, talent (she was also an accomplished pianist) and organizing ability she, more than anyone else, is responsible for the American Rock Garden Society. She summered in North Hatley, Quebec and corresponded with rock gardeners around the world, including Correvon and Clarence Elliott, who had sent her seeds of the newly introduced meconopsis, and Cleveland Morgan, who had created a rock garden, replete with a cemented moraine foundation, outside of Montreal. It was Martha Houghton's meeting with Dorothy Ebel Hansell, that dear and wonderful lady who carried on as editor of the *Gardener's Chronicle of America* so ably after her father's death until its demise in the 1940's, that started the ball rolling in 1931. The late Bernard Harkness had started his History of the ARGS with the following text:

"There was a dramatic moment in the spring of 1931 which could have delayed indefinitely the launching of the American Rock Garden Society. [Forty-three years later when Dorothy E. Hansell] spent a couple of days with me discussing the history of ARGS the whole scene was unfolded as if it had happened yesterday.

Mrs. Houghton, strongly loyal to Boston and the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, publishers of *Horticulture*, introduced into the first exploratory interview that she had come down to New York City to meet Dorothy."

That was it! That was as far as he got! And since both parties to the conversation are no longer with us I fear we'll never know the particular issue involved, but apparently one just didn't contradict Mrs. Houghton and the two ladies had had a falling out over a statement in the *Gardener's Chronicle*. It wasn't until three years later that they patched it up and got the society underway with the help of Montague Free, Tom Everett and others.

Even had the ARGS been formed in 1931 instead of 1934 it still would have been the second such society to be formed in the U.S. The credit for the first society goes to Robert Senior of Cincinnati who organized, with other ardent horticulturists, the Rock Garden Society of Ohio in 1929 a year before the organization of the Alpine Garden Society. Formation of ARGS meant the gradual eclipse of RGSO but Robert Senior, a recognized authority on the genus *Campanula*, remained a leading rock gardening figure of the region until his death in 1973. Another leading figure active in both Societies was Belden Saur of Rock Knoll Nurseries whose wife and daughter are with us tonight.

Mrs. Houghton, however, was the central figure, the touchstone that meant American Rock Gardening for rock gardeners to the east and to the west.

Clarence Senior in his Cincinnati rock garden.
Belden Saur

Thomas H. Everett in 1932.

Her garden was a marvel to behold, with acres of alpines and water features in the middle of Chestnut Hill. I can remember walking through it in the late 40's while at college and, without any explicit interest in plants or gardens at the time, being amazed. I wonder now if it didn't make a subtle, subconscious impression. Archie Thornton, a trained English gardener was in charge in the 20's and early 30's and must have had an extensive staff to help him. Mrs. Houghton had a sharp and discerning eye and is remembered in her later years pointing out weeds with her cane to be removed immediately by a retainer.

Archie Thornton was well known to Tom Everett, who was taking the American horticultural world by storm in his first years as an emigré. In those days Tom Everett was the most active of rock gardeners, having built a giant rock garden for Hiram Manville in Pleasantville, NY and filling horticultural magazines with articles on the subject. The best précis on all aspects of rock gardening and alpines ever produced can be found under that heading in his extraordinarily useful *Encyclopedia of Horticulture*. To illustrate the article he used photographs taken at the time the Thompson Memorial Rock Garden was being built at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx. These photographs are as fascinating now as they were then. Small wonder that Tom was a natural member of ARGS' founding group.

In fact the ties to England were very strong indeed and Martha Houghton was the Alpine Garden Society's first Secretary for the United States, a post currently filled by Linc Foster, one of our latter day Nestors. It was undoubtedly Mrs. Houghton who lined up ARGS' four Honorary Directors from the U.K. When Martha Houghton did things she did them first class.

These honorary directors were to some extent undoubtedly chosen to give the fledgling American society a certain cachet, but were, more importantly, well known British rock gardeners all and had, we may be sure, offered sound advice and encouragement to Mrs. Houghton in her venture.

The Thompson Memorial Rock Garden at NYBG in the making.

Henry McLaren, the First Lord Aberconway.

Evelyn Viscountess Byng of Vimy.

Sir Frederick Moore.

Lady Phylis Moore.

One of the four was Henry McLaren, the first Lord Aberconway who did so much to develop the garden at Bodnant started by his mother.

Sir William Lawrence, the then President of the Alpine Garden Society was originally supposed to be an Honorary Director, but unfortunately died shortly before the initial meeting of the society.

Sir William's place was taken by Sir Frederick Moore, Curator of the Glasnevin Botanic Gardens, Dublin, a post previously filled by his father with the result that the two Moores directed or were associated with the institution for over 100 successive years. Needless to say, they were, of course, Scottish, changing the name from Muir when they moved from Scotland to Ireland.

Sir Frederick's wife, Lady Phylis Moore was the third Honorary Director. Her knowledge of plants was said to rival that of Miss Willmott and her influence on and acquaintance with gardeners was prodigious. Lady Jean O'Neill of the Maine was grateful for her instruction and inspiration and remembers her as "a marvelous character—very Irish, a wonderful raconteur [with] a fabulous knowledge of plants." At the initial meeting of our Society Lady Moore was introduced as "the true godmother of the ARGS." The Moores were stepping into Sir William Lawrence's shoes as judges at the New York and Boston flower shows, which coincided with the ARGS' meeting.

Evelyn, Viscountess Byng of Vimy was the fourth and last Honorary Director but certainly not the least. In fact she had far closer ties to North America than the others and she is a legend or a lecture unto herself. Most importantly she wrote about her life, her travels and her gardens and it is a fascinating story that we can't look at, alas, in detail tonight. She wrote well and the chronicles of her gardening and plant hunting experiences make interesting reading, particularly a hilarious 1200 mile trip in the early 30's with Lester Rowntree collecting plants in the Californian mountains and visiting Carl Purdy in Okiah, California. Lady Byng succeeded to the Presidency of the AGS after Sir William Lawrence's death. Her life spanned the era of great rock gardens and gardeners from William Robinson's awakening to the genre to the post World War II gardens of today and she is a fitting point (you'll be relieved to know) at which to start winding down this glimpse of the past. But not without first taking a look a what rock gardening life was like in those days.

A corner of Martha Houghton's garden.

Martha Houghton traveled to England in the spring of 1936 to attend the first AGS conference and to visit gardens. She was 67 years old and kept a diary of the events. The boat trip over was a rough one, but she noted that despite "high wind" and a "full gale" much of the time she was "surprisingly a good sailor." The Morgans from Montreal were on board, but they didn't meet because the Morgans were traveling "tourist." She and her daughter, Betty, who was traveling with her, spent a cold but lovely 3rd of May visiting Gwendolyn Anley's alpine house and the Paul Rosenheim's garden. She learned of Lord Wakehurst's death and dined with Clarence Elliott. On May 5th the conference opened. She admired the show greatly and enjoyed meeting her fellow enthusiasts. She also received a cable from Dorothy Hansell that she had been elected President of the ARGS and dined that evening with Lord Aberconway, Lady Byng, Mrs. Reford, who had a large garden at Métis on the Gaspe, and the Hettricks from Huntington Gardens in California. Her companions at lunch were Major Stern and Ayman Correvon. Other Americans present were Florens DeBevoise, Kitty Taylor from Dover, Massachusetts and Kathleen Marriage from Colorado Springs, who was to the Colorado Rockies what Mesdames Frye, McCully and Banghart were to the Pacific Northwest. Then followed a complete ten day tour of alpine gardens in the southern half of England—Lady Byng's Thorpe Hall in Essex, Dr. Fred Stoker's, Frederick Hanbury's Brockhurst (she found it striking but rundown), Ingwersen's Nursery, Ernest Markham at Gravetye, the Millard's lovely garden at 'Camla,' on to Wales and 'Bodnant' and A.T. Johnson's garden at 'Roween.'

Fisher showed her a manuscript of Farrer's 1914 field notes. On to A.K. Bulley's and so on. Life in London was no less strenuous with meals at Boulestin's and Flemming's, Claridge's and the Grosvenor Grill, theatre on many of the nights (Noel Coward had several plays running at the time) and important shopping expeditons during the days. Florens DeBevoise acquired a poodle that was promptly dubbed "Winnie the Pooh" and required Martha Houghton's judgement when it came to purchasing a George II silver coffee pot. In fact there was barely time to squeeze in a visit to the Chelsea Show and to attend the Caledonian Ball before a comfortable embarkation on the 'Bremen' at Southampton with letters from home waiting in her cabin, along with alpine plants destined for Chestnut Hill and a new set of Boston-New York friends as fellow travelers. Halcyon days indeed.

Martha Houghton.

By the 30's rock gardening had become so prevalent that it became a useful whipping boy. Dr. M. Fernan-Nunez, Professor of Pathology of Marquette University Medical School in Milwaukee at the 1935 annual meeting of the American Public Health Association cited the craze for rock

gardening as the cause for an increase in malaria due to anopheles mosquitos breeding in their water features. The remedy was to be achieved by eliminating water from rock gardens. Montague Free rushed to defend the profession pointing out that stagnant water was anathema to the kind of plants most in demand for rock garden embellishment and that running water does not provide a satisfactory breeding spot. Besides most gardeners were aware of the desirability of maintaining fish in pools for the purpose of devouring mosquito larvae.

In the same year rock garden enthusiasts were blamed for the gradual disappearance of historic Fort Crawford in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, the scene of many battles between Indians and white men in pioneer days. Residents there (those Wisconsin folk seem to have been a pretty insecure lot when it came to rock gardening) believed the popularity of the rock garden had done more to cause the disapperance of the the old fort than anything else and estimated that in another ten years the fort would be gone. Well, we all have our priorities!

One cannot appreciate this era without looking at the kinds of exhibits that appeared regularly in the flower shows in the major cities.

By 1922 there had been substantial upgrading from the beginings in 1915, as witnessed by an exhibit of Julius Roehrs at the International Flower Show which won the Sweepstake prize of the Garden Club of America and by another of Bobbink and Atkins which won a gold medal.

There were three great rock garden designers in the East during the 20's and 30's. They all lived in New Jersey. One was Ralph Hancock, an Englishman, who was brought over to design and install the roof top gardens at Rockefeller Center. He built a fine rock garden on his place in New Jersey and was known as more of a landscape person than a plantsman.

Marcel Le Piniec, of course, is a legend in this society. After a career as a successful textile designer he founded Mayfair Nurseries and his exhibits at the Interna-

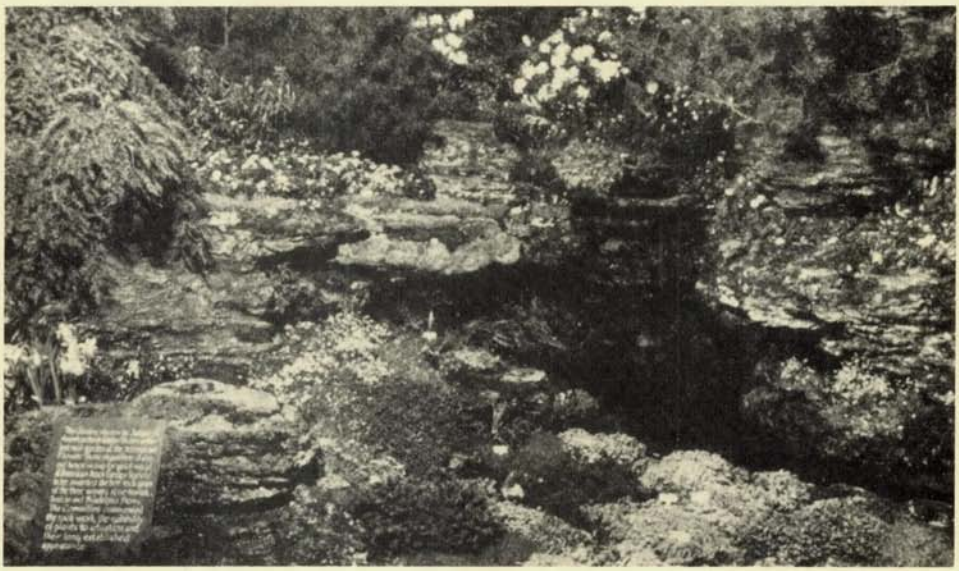
Mayfair Nurseries' prize-winning exhibit at the 1933 International Flower Show, New York.

tional Flower Show were works of art. He moved to Medford, Oregon after selling Mayfair in 1944, choosing it on the basis of meteorological studies and soon was busy collecting and operating a small nursery in the Rogue Valley where he joined Clarice Nye and John Heckner as a mentor of Boyd Kline and Lawrence Crocker.

There was keen competition in rock garden exhibits from the likes of Mrs. DeBevoise's Cronamere Nurseries, Frederic Leubuscher of Essex Falls, New Jersey and, of course, Zenon Schreiber who had started with LePiniec and was probably responsible for some of his exhibits. Schreiber invariably won gold medals and at one point won a special gold medal for the best rock garden exhibit in the Boston, Philadelphia and New York shows combined. Zenon Schreiber also designed the rock garden in the Gardens on Parade at the 1939 New York World's Fair. The garden was given by Mrs. Cutting under the auspices of an ARGS committee consisting of Martha Houghton, Else Frye and Tom Everett.

Marcel Le Piniec, Lawrence Crocker and Boyd Kline collecting in the Siskiyous.

F. Kingdon Ward and C. Suydam Cutting at the rock garden in the Gardens on Parade at the 1939 New York World's Fair designed by Zenon Schreiber.



Zenon Schreiber received a special Gold Medal for the best rock garden exhibit in the Boston, Philadelphia and New York shows combined.

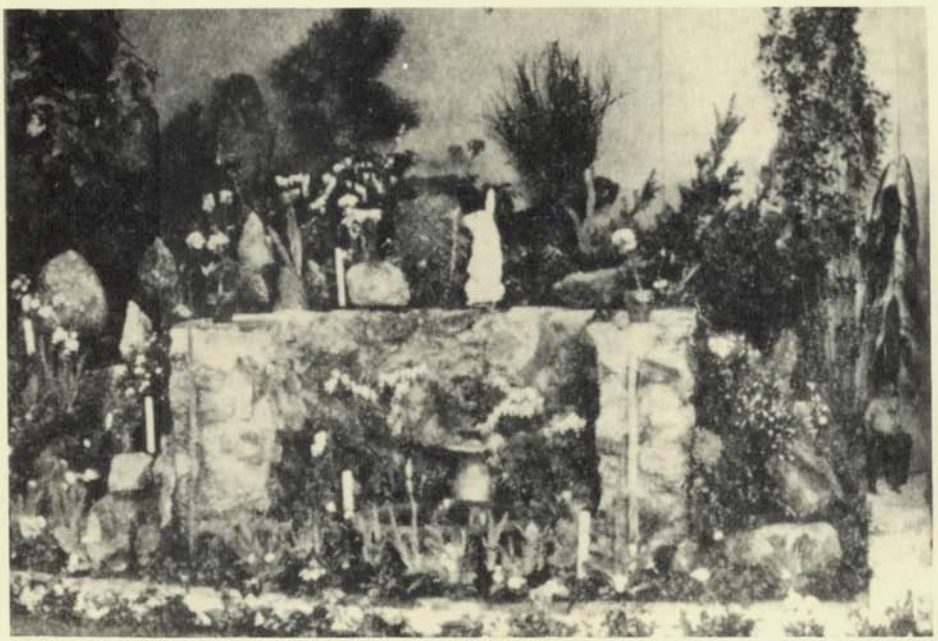
The second annual meeting of the ARGS was held in St. Louis in 1935 and featured an International Exhibition. The standards of the judges were sufficiently high that they elected not to give a first prize. Nieman Nurseries' exhibit won second prize, the highest award, and the Rock Garden Society of Ohio had to settle for honorable mention.

In Boston they felt it incumbent to set some standards for the rock garden world and to teach the great mass of horticulturally unwashed, prospective rock gardeners what it was all about. In 1938 the ARGS had two rock garden exhibits in Boston—"How to" and "How not to." I'm rather drawn to the latter myself.

These exhibits were publicized nationally and it wasn't too long before a Mrs. Higgins of Butte, Montana was carried away by the same missionary zeal and talked the Butte Chamber of Commerce into a similar exhibit that remained in their window from July 1st to August 15th. If history is any guide it seems doubtful that these exhibits made much impression. Gardeners like to create their own visions, however inadequate.

The spirit of Butte was echoed in the efforts of the Minnishoshe Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution who faithfully refurnished Teddy Roosevelt's cabin from the Chimney Butte Ranch near Medora, North Dakota after it had been moved to Bismarck and created a superb garden of native species that Claude Barr would have been proud of. The Minneshosans were pleased to have the steady stream of visitors to the cabin exposed to the native species.

Pamphlets were published, seeds were distributed and medals were struck to encourage enthusiasts; such as the 1935 one awarded to Tom Everett earlier this evening. And the missionary work extended to the lecture platform. Mrs.



How not to build a rock garden.

Houghton had a set of glass slides. A large box contained them. Inside that box there was another box. Martha Houghton went first class all the way and took no chances. Inside that second box were over 100 beautifully packed slides. The good thing about hand-painted glass slides is that one could get the color just the way one wanted it—especially the blues.

Mrs. Stout's box, with its syllabus introducing rock gardening to the uninitiated was a more modest affair. This box was shipped to Asheville in the winter of 1938 so that the ARGS members in Asheville could use the slides for propaganda at a reception to be held in the ballroom of the George Vanderbilt Hotel as a warmup for the annual meeting which was to be held in Asheville in April. But something, we don't know what, went wrong. In her address to that year's annual meeting, which was held on May 16th in New York, Mrs. Houghton says:

"It is, however, one of "life's little ironies" that, having waived our By-Laws in order to hold an annual meeting during April in North Carolina, we should find ourselves today in the City of New York. Seemingly ill-fated, we are at least technically correct during May. [Now here comes the rough stuff.] I am told that in every national organization difficulties arise where special consideration seems lacking, or where opinions are strong enough to oppose the governing body. It is the duty of the governing body to try to understand these difficulties and iron them out. I have just returned from the South Atlantic Region where, representing the executive board, I have had frank and friendly discussions concerning the causes of changing our Spring plans."

Politics are always a rough business in any endeavour but at the least we have finally got to Asheville some 46 years later.

The wheel invariably comes full circle and it is time to stop and to reflect on our heritage. It is a time to remember the individuals who played a role in our beginings and who contributed so much to our knowledge of alpines and rock gardening; to reflect upon the comforting fact that 50 years is only a fraction of a true gardener's life; to rejoice that Tom Everett, a Founder and Patriarch, is still with us; to hark back to those halcyon days when all was beautiful and when American rock gardeners were discovering the joys of plant hunting in the wilds and, finally, to congratulate ourselves for being caught up in this most special of human devotions, which may not have changed that much over time after all.

As it was in the beginning
is now
And ever shall be
World without end
Amen

1935 Gold Medal awarded to Thomas H. Everett.

Herbert Durand (on right) with Dana Andrews and others leaving Medicine Bow for a day's search on the *House and Garden Plant Exploring Expedition into the Flowered Rockies of Colorado* circa 1928.

The woman who grew Meconopsis
Was asked to give a synopsis,
How can I she cried,
When all of them died,
Do more than describe
their autopsies?

Martha Houghton, April 1934
composed on the train en route
to the first meeting of the
ARGS.

"We are joyfully discovering that by using our native wildflowers for foundation, groundwork and massed color effects, and enhancing their refined beauty by interspersing plants of harmonious hue and aspects from other lands, we are actually and at last creating a brand new and distinctively American type of rock gardening that cannot be surpassed anywhere on earth."

Herbert Durand, March 1930

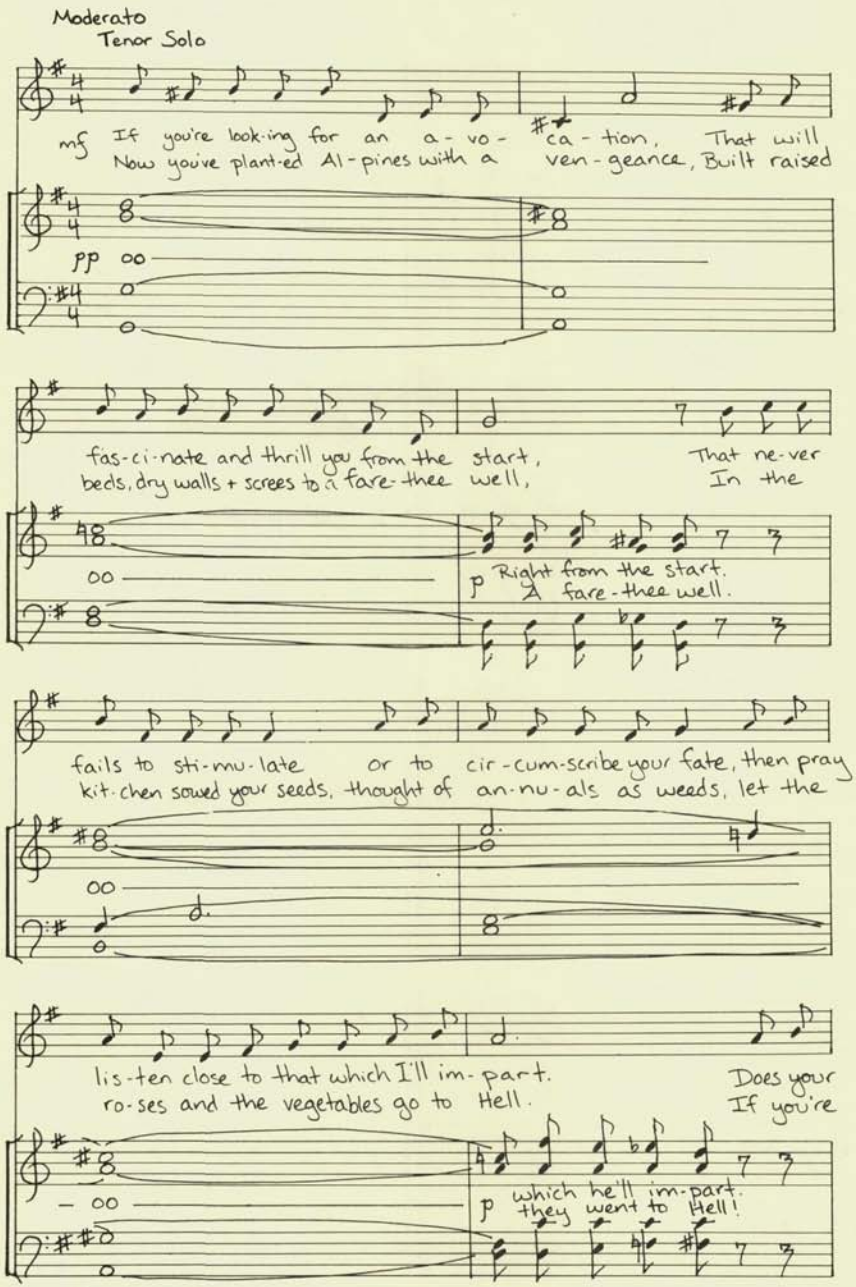
Sarracenia rubra.

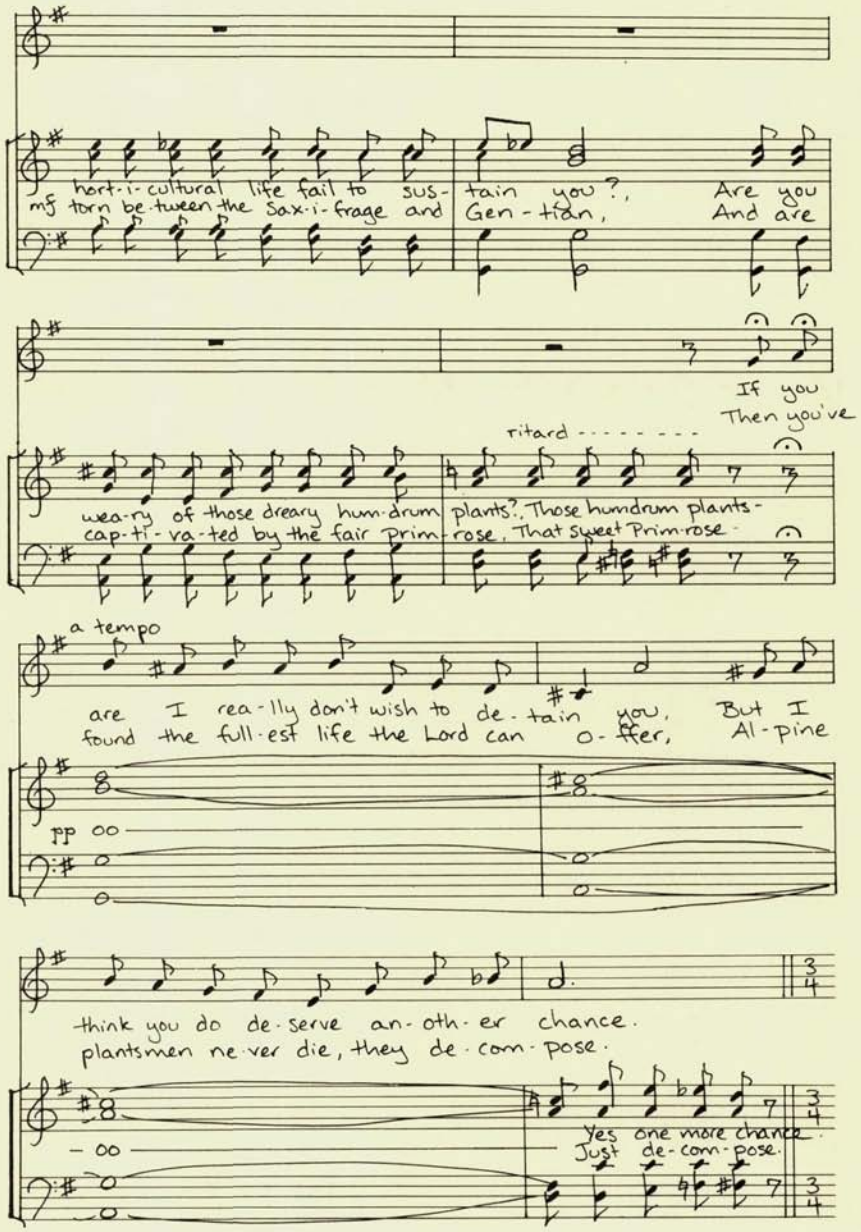
"Surely the amateur botanist has one of the finest hobbies in the world—a hobby which brings him close to nature—a life-time hobby which provides a never failing interest—a pastime which takes him out in the wide-open spaces during the Summertime, and gives him ample occupation on Winter evenings when he sits at a table, mounting and classifying his specimens and living again in spirit the rambles and hikes of the previous Summer."

Thomas H. Everett, 1929

THE ARGS HYMN

(or the Alpine Gardeners Lament)

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Gen-tian, And are
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ritard
wea-ry of those dreary hum-drum plants?. Those humdrum plants-
cap-ti-va-ted by the fair prim- rose. That sweet Prim-rose
a tempo
are I rea-lly don't wish to de-tain you, But I
found the full-est life the Lord can o-ffer, Al-pine
pp
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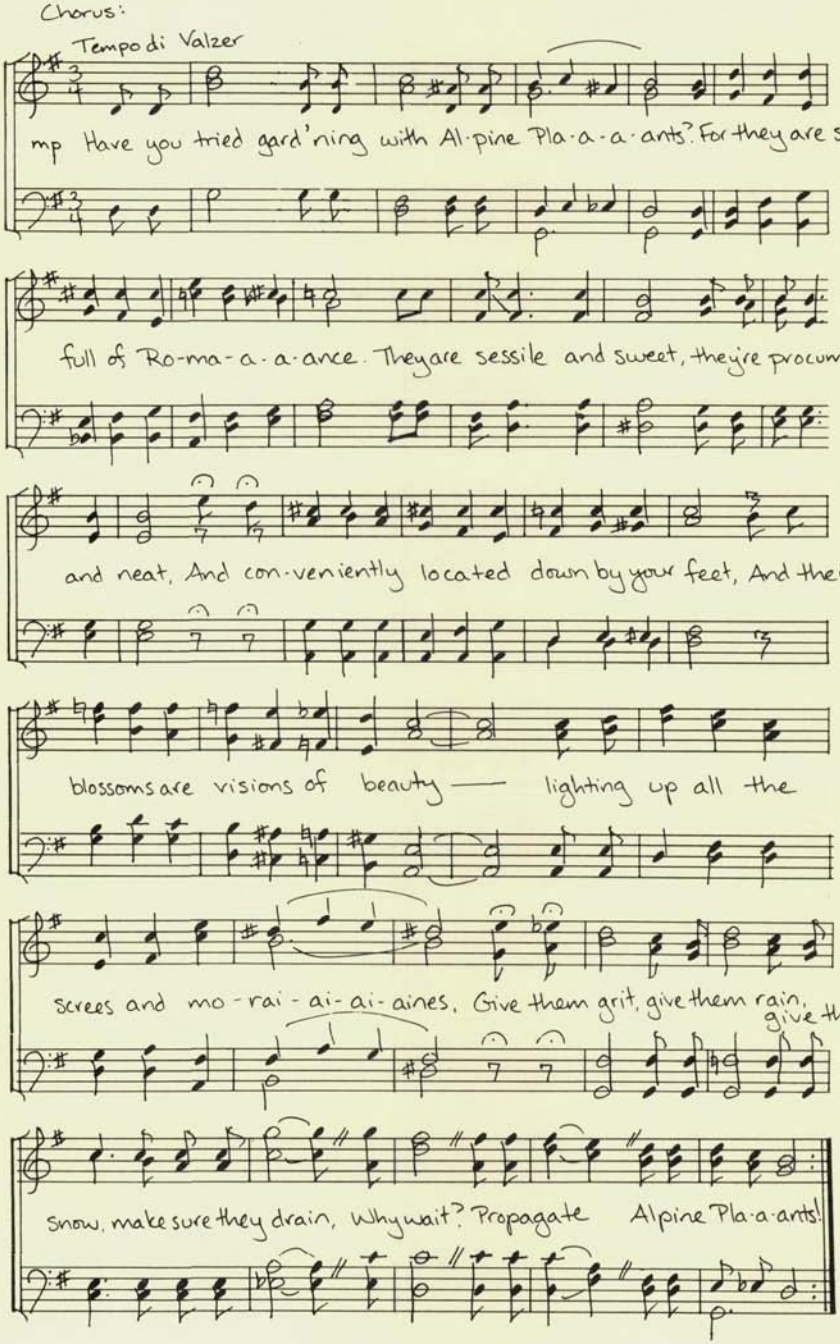
plantsmen ne-ver die, they de-com-pose.
Yes one more chance
Just de-com-pose.


Chorus:
Tempo di Valzer
mp Have you tried gard'ning with Al-pine Pla-a-a-ants? For they are so
full of Ro-ma-a-a-ance. They are sessile and sweet, they're procumbent
and neat, And con-veniently located down by your feet, And their
blossoms are visions of beauty — lighting up all the
screes and mo-rai-ai-ai-aines. Give them grit, give them rain, give them
snow, make sure they drain, Why wait? Propagate Alpine Pla-a-ants!

"The more I study flowers, the more I feel how little I know about them."

"It is impossible to get or keep a large collection except by constant liberality in giving. 'There is that scattereth and yet increaseth' was Solomon's experience, and it is certainly so with gardening."

Canon Ellacombe

"The longer I garden the more I realize my ignorance in the whole matter."

Evelyn, Viscountess Byng of Vimy

"Remember that it is better to place one rock as it should be placed than ten at random, without thought and care. . . Remember, also, that in handling rocks, the more slowly you work the more you will accomplish."

Marcel Le Piniec

"The heartbreak caused by Eritrichium's swift departure is as classic as the desire caused by its exquisite loveliness."

Anderson McCully

"I hope we may achieve something over and above the mere decorative use of the high born wildings in walls and walks. I do not like the idea of speckled trout in goldfish bowls."

P.J. Van Melle

"The shed blood of disagreeing enthusiasts is the seed of the garden, and the hostilities of gardeners seem only equaled in righteous acrimony by those of Patriarchs, and Popes, Anglican Bishops and other persons of profession presumably holy."

Reginald Farrer

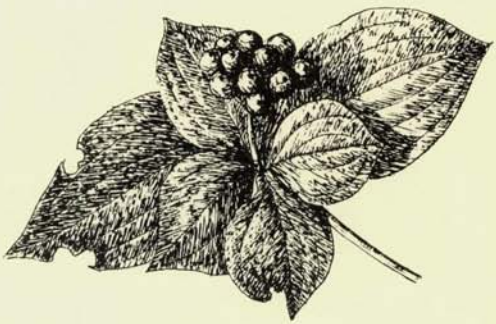
"I have never met such an enthusiastic man for plants and especially for alpines."

Henri Correvon commenting on Reginald Farrer in a letter to Mrs. Houghton

Hexastylis minor in Tom and Bruce Shinn's garden.
Judy Glattstein

"A rock garden is a place in which to grow plants. The rocks are secondary. If one is making a collection of rocks, one's pursuit is geology rather than gardening."

Liberty Hyde Bailey



"A rock garden should be a happy haven of consummated hope, where the word 'depression' is unknown."

Ralph Hancock, 1932

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Awake, my Muse, bring bell and book
To curse the hand that cuttings took.
May every sort of garden pest
His little plot of ground infest

Who took the plants from my moraine,
Deserves a most insidious pain;

Who stole the plants from my best trough,
Has earned a terminally fatal cough;

Who purloined seedlings from my scree,
Should end up hanging from a tree;

Let spider mites and taxus weevils,
Thrips and slugs and other evils
Slay his choicest alpine treasures
While muggs of August end his pleasures.

With apologies to Lady Maconochie