The Gardener's Journal

Reynolda Gardens of Wake Forest University

Summer 2006

## It's All in the Timing

*by* **David Bare**, *RGWFU greenhouse manager*

A woman came up to me in the garden the other day with a handful of seed packets. She and her two young sons had just returned from a trip to Butchart Gardens in Victoria, British Columbia, and it had sparked the older boy's interest in gardening. They wanted to know if it was too late to start their new acquisitions. Encouraging kids to get into gardening has always been one of our missions here at Reynolda, so I was glad to oblige.

It turned out that this handful of seeds illustrated one of the most important lessons in gardening—it's all in the timing. There were snapdragons and foxgloves that needed a fall start, morning glories that need the length of the growing season's heat, and calendulas that can be started several times on either end of the summer. There were also perennials that would need to be stratified (exposed to moist cold) and Himalayan blue poppies, *Meconopsis betonicifolia* that no amount of coddling or cajoling was likely to bring to fruition in the Piedmont of North Carolina.

Knowing when to get things started involves having some familiarity with both your climate and the plants you wish to grow. In the southern Piedmont we have three distinct seasons to garden in, and each seems to grow some things better than the others.

It is always difficult to think ahead to the fall or spring garden during summer's stupefying heat, but in the dog days of August, bulbs should be ordered and spring biennials, such as foxglove, *Digitalis*; forget-me-not, *Myosotis*; English daisy, *Bellis*; wallflower, *Cheiranthus*; and others should be started, as well as the beginnings of the autumn vegetable garden. Autumn is perhaps my favorite time in the Piedmont garden, as the temperature begins to mellow, and rainfall becomes a little more reliable. The flower borders are then rich with the exuberant pro-

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## Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes in the Garden

*by* **Diane Wise**, *RGWFU head horticulturist*

Borders and gardens retain the "feel" of the early garden.

It's that time of year again, the time when I begin to think about the fall plantings in the formal garden. But before I really delve into the upcoming season, I always take some time to review the summer garden—which plants survived the heat and humidity; which ones need to be replaced next season because they've gotten too woody; which roses should be pruned more heavily next March; or then again, which roses are slow growers and should be left a little taller. The list goes on and on. You know how it is with true gardeners; we're never really satisfied with how things look. We're constantly refining our gardens in the hopes that next year they will look better than ever.

Well, I have to admit that this has been one of the better years at Reynolda. With a very mild winter; a long, cool spring; and abundant rainfall throughout, the formal garden has really been magnificent. And many thanks to all of you who have taken the time to share that with us in your thoughtful notes and telephone calls. As much as I'd love to claim the praise, I really can't. It's simply a matter of "Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes," to quote Ziggy Stardust, a.k.a. David Bowie, because this spring we made a number of changes. Changes that have resulted, or soon will, in the beauty we've all enjoyed.

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## It's All in the Timing

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duction of summer and the new growth of cool season annual and perennial flowers, and the tired vegetable garden is rejuvenated with new crops.

### Convincing Seeds to Get Started

Getting there takes some doing, though. Cool season vegetables often have to be tricked into germinating in the heat of summer. One way to accomplish this is to soak seeds, such as peas, in a jar of water inside in the air-conditioned house, or to wrap them in moist paper towels and keep them in the vegetable crisper of the refrigerator. Exposing them to cycles of heat and cold will trigger germination. Where seeds such as lettuce are direct-sown, shading the soil can reduce its temperature and increase germination. Peas, lettuce, and spinach all germinate best when temperatures are right around seventy degrees.

Some seeds need to experience a cold period before they will sprout. Perennial flowers, as well as many trees and shrubs, require this. This is a biological safety net to keep tender seedlings from being exposed to cold weather too soon. Once the temperatures have moderated, the triggers are sprung, and the seed sprouts. Not all perennials need to be stratified, but if you are at a loss to know which plants require it, no harm is done by going through the process. These seeds can be sprouted any number of ways, but the most effective I have found is to place them in a plastic sandwich bag along with a pinch of just slightly moist sand. Place them in the refrigerator vegetable crisper for two months and then sow the seed, sand and all, in a pot of potting soil.

### Experiment With New Seeds to Find Their Time

Our first attempts at establishing the plants for the test plot called Mrs. Reynolds' Old-fashioned Flower Garden largely failed because the timing was off. This garden is full of biennials and cool season annuals: larkspur, *Consolida*; poppy, *Papaver rhoeas*; sweet William, *Dianthus barbatus*; African daisy, *Osteospermum*; satin flower, *Clarkia*; and calliopsis, *Coreopsis basalis*, as well as a handful of perennials. As is often the case in the spring, we were behind with plant sales and other projects, and when we finally were able to get the plants out that we had started, they were met with a short spring quickly turning to summer. Though there were a few successes, they were few and far between. We then attempted to plant many of the same plants in autumn, and the opposite happened—too cold too soon. Though a few of our biennials pulled through and bloomed heroically this spring, we found that the best recipe for success with these plants is to get them out very early in spring and hope for the best—a long, cool spring gradually fading to summer. This spring could not have been more cooperative, and the results were beautiful.

Sedum and plectranthus grow easily from cuttings.

### Propagation and Planting in the Fall and Winter

Autumn also means that the greenhouse begins to fill up with cuttings of the tender perennials that are blooming so luxuriantly in the garden. Though they are at their finest in late autumn, the first touch of frost brings it all tumbling down. In order to secure their continued production, we have to propagate them in the greenhouse through cuttings.

We begin to plant established pansies, *Viola* and snapdragons, *Antirrhinum* as the frost becomes imminent. Soon after, bulbs for spring flowering will be set in the ground. In the greenhouse, amaryllis, *Hippeastrum* bulbs are being planted in preparation for Christmas sales. Paperwhite narcissus, *Narcissus papyraceus* will not be far behind.

We also start Iceland poppies, *Papaver nudicale* at this time. These colorful, chiffon-petaled flowers on wiry stems are the portrait of delicacy as they unfold in the spring, but in fact they are as tough as nails. Started in November, they are moved out into the extremes of midwinter without the slightest bit of wilt. I have seen whole flats of them completely encased in a solid block of ice, only to thaw and carry on as if nothing had happened. The least bit of heat, though, and they go over.

Many poppies act this way, but the Icelands are particularly cold hardy and sensitive to the heat. I often broadcast-sow Shirley poppies, *Papaver rhoeas* and larkspurs, *Consolida ambigua* in the fall, giving them six to eight weeks of growth before the cold sets in and holds them in a kind of suspended animation. Once spring begins, they commence growing and flower. I have heard it said that some people sow these seeds on the surface of the snow, and the melting takes the seeds down, where they sprout in the spring. Sounds romantic, but it doesn't give the necessary jump that an autumn sowing does. By far the best method for these two is to let them establish their own cycle. Left to their own devices, they will reseed themselves, and all the gardener has to do is edit.

November is a wonderful time to plant new trees and shrubs. They don't suffer from heat or cold, and moisture is usually plentiful and lingers. Deciduous shrubs are, for the most part, dormant at this point, but their roots will continue to grow into the new soil.

The garden rests through the months of January and February, but the greenhouse is busy already with propagation for the spring. Difficult cuttings, such as plumbago and some reluctantly rooting salvias and lantanas, are attempted first to give them a good jump on spring. The typical cutting will spend ten days to three weeks in the cutting bench before being potted up for another six to eight weeks and finally set out.

Careful timing is also necessary for the vegetable garden. Tomatoes take about four to six weeks from seed to become established enough to move outside. If the typical frost-free date in Forsyth County is mid-April, then you count back from there to know when to start seeds. Good gardeners often use these dates as starting points and challenge them every year, a gamble that as many times as not pays off.

**Correct Timing is Essential for All Garden and Plant Care**

Timing does not just figure into propagation but to virtually every garden chore and practice. Pruning too early can remove the dormant buds that harbor the coming year's fruit and flowers. Pruning too late can cause a plant to flush growth at an inappropriate time and result in cold damage. Fertilizing late in the season can have the same result. Many insect pests have distinct life cycles, and controlling them to best effect involves breaking that cycle. Mealybug generations are complete within seven to ten days. Spraying within that interval can go a long way toward controlling successive generations. Some of the South African succulents in the conservatory collection have periods of dormancy that can be disrupted by watering at the inappropriate time. This can result in aborted flowers or even rot. The same is true of *Catasetum*, *Lycaste*, and *Galeandra* orchids. Without the proper resting period, when the plant receives a radically reduced watering schedule, there will be no flowers.

Knowing what plants need and how to match those needs to the environment they are being grown in is a simple definition of what horticulture is all about. This is the stuff "green thumbs" are made of.

DAVID TENDING THE GARDENS.

## Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes in the Garden

*Continued from page 1*

Remember the staff's Three Year Rule? For those of you who have forgotten it or are new to *The Gardener's Journal*, the Three Year Rule states that we grow a plant, as listed on the restoration plan, for three years. If it does well and looks great, it gets to stay in the garden; however, if after three years and lots of tweaking, *i.e.*, more water, less water, more fertilizer, vigorous pruning, etc., the plant still looks awful, then it is wrenched from the soil and thrown on the compost heap. I know it sounds unfair, but as my Grammy used to say, and I'm sure yours did too, "Whoever said life is fair?" The bottom line for me, and I think most passionate gardeners, is that our gardens should be pretty. Who wants to struggle with a plant that may be ill-suited to this environment and will never look the way it's supposed to look? Not me. I'd much rather make a substitution and use a plant that will flourish in this setting.

How does one make a change/substitution in a historic landscape like Reynolda? Very carefully. First, we try to substitute plants that were used here on the estate. Luckily, we have Thomas Sears' original landscape plans for the garden, house, and village, and they have provided a wealth of plants from which to choose. Often we are unable to locate the species and will have to use a modern cultivar (variety). Second, we try to use plants that are of the same height, form, flower color, and bloom time. Third, we really try to maintain the "feel" of each particular garden. I know that "feel" can be difficult to understand, but there is a definite "feel" to the gardens here, from the main allée, which is rather formal, to the Blue and Yellow Garden, which is wild and exuberant. And last, we greatly rely on the test garden that Camilla and David have planted for the last two years. What is the point of making a change if the substitution grows no better than the original? One only has to walk by the test garden to see which plants fare well in our environment and which don't.

So invoking the Three Year Rule, we made a number of changes to the formal garden this year. Using the criteria outlined above, we selected appropriate substitutions. Some were planted in the spring; others will be added in the fall and early winter. And what a difference the new plants made to the garden! Every single substitution has survived our heat and humidity to date and has greatly enriched the landscape. On the following page, I have listed each substitution, its location, and a brief description. Those plants marked with an asterisk will be added later in the season.

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## Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes in the Garden

*Continued from page 3*

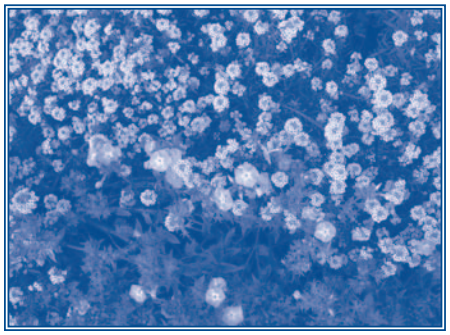
***Aquilegia flabellata* Nana Alba, White Columbine**
Main allée. Perennial with waxy, white blooms on six to nine inch compact mound. Blue foliage. Blooms in late spring to early summer. Full sun to partial shade. Grows easily from seed and self sows. Zone 4-9. Substitute for *Campanula carpatica*, which does not tolerate heat.

***Aster tataricus* Jin Dai, Tatarian Aster**
Main allée and Blue and Yellow Garden. Herbaceous perennial with purple, daisy-like flowers with yellow centers on four foot plant with two foot spread. Blooms in September and October. Attracts butterflies. Full sun with moderate moisture. Zone 4-8. Used, along with *Caryopteris*, to replace monkshood, *Aconitum carmichaelii*, which developed botrytis, a fungus that is almost impossible to eradicate.

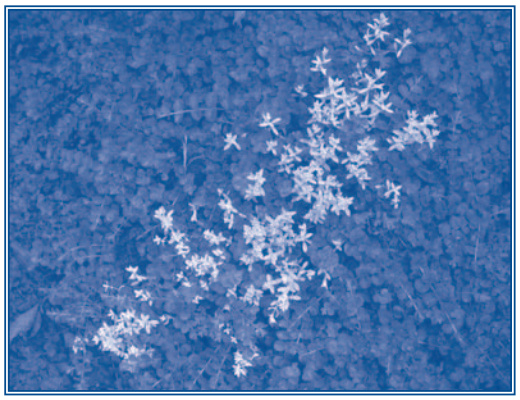
***Caryopteris x cladonensis* Longwood Blue, Blue-Mist Shrub**
Main allée and Blue and Yellow Garden. Deciduous shrub with arching branches and violet-blue flowers on three foot plant with two foot spread. Silver foliage. Blooms from midsummer until frost. Attracts butterflies. Full sun to partial shade. Zone 5-9. Used, along with *Aster tataricus*, to replace *Aconitum carmichaelii*. See *Aster tataricus*.

***Heuchera sanguinea*, Coral Bells**
Main allée. Evergreen, mounded perennial with small, red, bell-shaped flowers on twelve to eighteen inch plant. Blooms early to midsummer. Attracts bees and butterflies. Sun or shade. Moderate moisture and well-drained soil. Zone 7-10. Placed in former location of *Delphinium x belladonna*, which requires full sun but was heavily shaded by *Buddleia davidii*.

***Lobularia maritima* Little Dorrit, Sweet Alyssum**
Main allée. Fragrant annual with dense, snow-white clusters of delicate flowers growing on six inch mound. Blooms from June until hard frost. Important food source for beneficial insects. Tolerates heat and humidity. Must have sun but will grow in any type of soil, wet or dry, and in red clay.



**Sweet alyssum and drummond phlox**



***Cerastium* struggles in summer heat and humidity.**

Grows easily from seed and can be direct sown in May. Substitute for *Cerastium tomentosum*, which does not tolerate heat or humidity.

***Philadelphus x lemoinei* Avalanche, Mock Orange**
Cross allée. Deciduous shrub with arching branches and fragrant, single, white flowers on four foot plant with three foot spread. Blooms in early summer. Full sun to partial shade; will tolerate any soil, except poorly drained. Zone 5-9. Substitute for the common lilac, *Syringa vulgaris*, which does not tolerate heat and is very prone to borers.

***Rosa* Captain Christy**
West Greenhouse Rose Garden. Very vigorous, repeat blooming hybrid tea rose with large, soft pink blooms with a deeper pink, raised center on long, strong stems. Extremely fragrant. Tolerant of poor soil. Developed in 1873. Substitute, along with *R.* 'Lady Alice Stanley', for *R.* 'La Tosca', which is marginally hardy here.

***R.* Lady Alice Stanley**
West Greenhouse Rose Garden. Repeat blooming hybrid tea rose with very large, bi-colored blooms of pink with coral reverse and healthy, vigorous foliage. Intensely fragrant. Developed in 1909. Substitute, along with *R.* 'Captain Christy' for *R.* 'La Tosca'. See *R.* 'Captain Christy'.

# The Right Rosemary for You

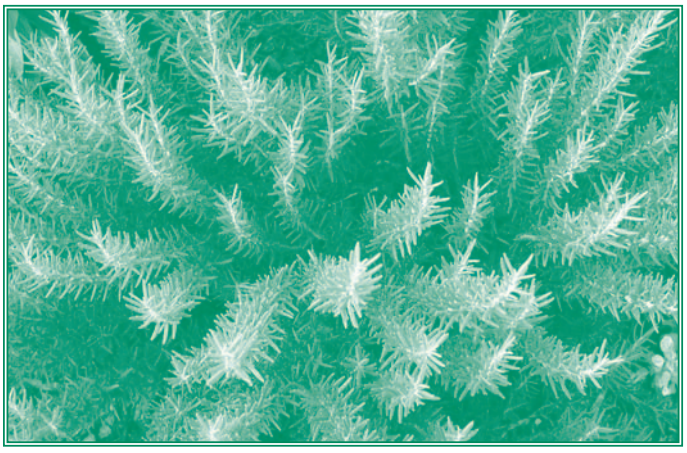
*by* **Michelle Hawks**, *RGWFU horticulturist*

Shakespeare's Ophelia tells us that "rosemary is for remembrance," and over time it has come to be known as such. It is given in the hope that you will be thought of or to signify that someone is on your mind. The ancient Greeks wore garlands of rosemary during exams to improve memory. Today rosemary is being tested for its "memory power" in several research groups that are hoping for improvements in the thinking processes in Alzheimer's patients.

Romantic legends that entwine with the true history of this woody, shrub-like herb are as pervasive as its own pungent fragrance. Not only has it long been a symbol of remembrance, but it is also associated with constancy and fidelity; possibly this is why it was woven into bridal wreaths. Just recently my mother and her husband renewed their wedding vows. I made her a bridal bouquet with roses and rosemary after discovering the historical symbolism of this long-lived plant. Legends also tell that if a bride takes a rosemary plant to her new home, and if the plant prospers, she is sure to be a dominant wife.

The botanical name *Rosmarinus* is from the old Latin for "dew of the sea," a reference to its pale, dew-like flowers and the fact that it grows naturally near the sea. This is a tough, hard-working plant that likes good air movement around its branches, moderate to semi-dry root moisture conditions, and an abundance of sunshine. It is a plant worth a gardener's efforts.

*R. officinalis* is an evergreen herb that has the scent of pine and lemon. The leaves vary from delicate, gray needles to broader, green ones. Its habit may be tall or prostrate; twisted or straight; busy or sparse. The clustered flowers include shades of violet, blue, pink, or white. The variations are determined by the plant species and will add vibrancy to any garden all year long. Here are some of the varieties I grew this year.



***R. o.* Tuscan Blue**

It quickly forms an upright, branched hedge of aromatic, needle-like foliage, with leaves broader than other varieties. Clear blue flowers add to the beauty. Takes to pruning well, perfect for screens. Evergreen, full sun. Moderate growing shrub, four to six feet tall, two to four feet wide. Well-drained soil.

***R. angustifolius* Pine-scented**

This one has finely textured leaves that are easily chopped up. This, plus an excellent flavor, make this rosemary the variety many chefs prefer. It is a different species from the others, and it shows. Other varieties have such coarse leaves that using them fresh can be a problem; even chopped fine, they are tough, but this plant's leaves are soft, like cilantro or parsley. A very pretty plant in the landscape or in a container, with a soft sea-green color; grows to about three to four feet high and wide. Full sun. Well-drained soil.

***R. o.* Pink-flowering**

It has the thinnest leaves of all rosemary plants. Gracefully curved branches are punctuated by short spires that rise randomly, like exclamation points. Even though the flower color is pale, there are so many flowers that they combine and provide a wonderful cloud of pink, especially when viewed at a distance. Growing quickly to two feet, this plant can be enjoyed in its natural whirlwind shape or pruned into a hedge. It is not the best choice for cooking.

***R. o.* Arp**

This is one of the ones to plant if you live where winter temperatures are frequently in the teens or less. It is erect, growing to about three feet. The flowers are light blue. Full sun. Well-drained soil.

***R. o.* Golden Rain**

Its upright foliage can brighten a semi-shady spot. It looks great in a container with hot pink geraniums or offers an interesting specimen in a gold garden. Located among too many green plants, it can look in need of fertilizer. The golden hue turns darker green over the summer and returns with cooler weather. The flowers are light blue.

***R. o.* Spice Island**

This happens to be my favorite type. It has thick, juicy-looking leaves and very upright growth, with nice, dark blue flowers. It is great for cooking and should also dry well. It stands very erect and grows to about four feet.

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# Thomas Sears, Four Decades at Reynolda

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

Thomas Sears came to work at Reynolda at the beginning of a long, productive career in landscape architecture. Over the years, he returned many times. Each time, Reynolda was at a critical juncture, as it evolved from a collection of farms to a private estate, and finally, at least in part, to a college campus. Each time, his special touch helped ease the transition.

### The Early Days of Reynolda

From its inception, Reynolda was Katharine Reynolds' province. She set the highest standards for all aspects of planning, construction, and operation, and she hired the most qualified people to help her achieve her goals. By all accounts, she was attentive to details and energetic in oversight of all of her projects. Even after Mr. Reynolds died in 1918, she continued to plan, implement, and build. After she married Edward Johnston in 1921, she maintained her interest in projects she had already brought to fruition. She expanded her land holdings to build a polo field on the north side of the estate and began planning a residential subdivision on the south. Although this exciting building period lasted less than twenty years, it was a time filled with dreams for what the estate could be. Through many of these years, Thomas Sears was her advisor in all matters related to the landscape.

When Mrs. Johnston died in 1924, the dream of a showcase country estate that would be enjoyed by many generations to follow died with her. The children of her marriage to Mr. Reynolds were young, and Mr. Johnston returned to live in his native Baltimore with their son. The property was placed under trusteeship. Although the farms and other commercial ventures were still in operation, and the landscape and gardens were well cared for, the lack of direction by a skilled and dedicated owner led to a gradual decline. The stream of landscape plans that had once flowed from Thomas Sears' office all but stopped; the few produced focused on maintenance reduction.

### The Changing World of Landscape Architecture

As a young man, Thomas Sears had been prepared to assist Mrs. Reynolds in reaching her goal of creating a beautiful, pastoral estate with a collection of farms; lush, rich, ornamental plantings; carefully sited structures; and unifying pathways and roads. He was one of the best in his field, a Harvard graduate, and associated with the leading landscape architects of

AERIAL VIEW BEFORE CONSTRUCTION BEGAN.
*COURTESY OF THE LLOYD WINCHELL BIEBIGHEISER COLLECTION, WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVES*

his day. He had been employed by the Olmsted firm, which was widely known for its plans for the Vanderbilt estate in Asheville and several major parks and subdivisions. He was a renowned photographer and had traveled extensively to photograph and study gardens and landscapes; his high-quality photographs appeared in many publications. When he established his own practice, he quickly became recognized for serenely beautiful creations of gardens and estates for the well-to-do. He was in demand for projects throughout the eastern seaboard. The stock market crash of 1929 affected his current and potential clients, and much of the estate practice he had built began to falter. With time, families would turn to him again to create beautiful landscapes, but these projects would never again be on the massive scale they once were.

While his estate practice declined, his institutional client list expanded. His Harvard training had encompassed all aspects of landscape architecture, from city planning, to park construction, to college campus design, and he was well equipped to respond to new clients' needs. Early experience with institutional clients, first with the Olmsted firm and later on his own, had helped him prepare for this transition as well. Some of these designs for institutions were local or within the state, and thus likely connected directly or indirectly to his association with Reynolda. In the early 1920s, when he was actively engaged at Reynolda, he was also involved in landscape planning for the N.C. State Normal School, now UNC-Greensboro, which Mrs. Reynolds had attended, and R.J. Reynolds High School, which she funded as a memorial for her first husband. In 1927 he worked on a design for the Forsyth County Courthouse. In 1929 he designed the Governor's Mansion

grounds in Raleigh. He continued to work with institutional clients in other regions as well. He designed the Scott Outdoor Amphitheater for Swarthmore College in 1929. In 1930 he worked with architect Charles Z. Klauder on the campus of Pennsylvania State College, and in 1934 he was hired to supervise planting on the campus of Bryn Mawr College.

### A New Direction for Reynolda

At around the same time, Mary Reynolds Babcock, daughter of Katharine and R.J. Reynolds, and her husband, Charles, agreed to purchase Reynolda from other heirs. Mrs. Babcock was in her middle twenties and just beginning the process of establishing a home and family of her own. Although the Babcocks planned to spend much of the year in Connecticut, near Mr. Babcock's office in Manhattan, Mrs. Babcock immersed herself in bringing the family home at Reynolda back to life, redecorating the residence and playhouse and cultivating her own interest in gardening and planting. With modernization of the house came the need for new landscaping. Like her mother, Mrs. Babcock called upon Thomas Sears to help. This project was not to be a continuation of his previous work at Reynolda, however. The few plans he drew for terraces, steps, and gardens were not part of a grand, broader vision or the basis for an extensive renovation. They simply added beauty and utility to the areas around the residence.

The direction of the estate was now determined by owners of a new generation, one that was not so closely tied to the land and farming or to the concept of the idyllic country house and estate, as the previous generation had been. The young family, in residence only on holidays and vacation periods, would enjoy and care for the land, gardens, and buildings closest to the house, but what would they do with the rest of the property? Hundreds of acres of woodland, orchards, pastures, and vineyards to the north of Lake Katharine would soon be brought into the city and thus be subject to city taxes. With little interest in maintaining the farmland that had so drawn her parents, and a looming tax burden, Mrs. Babcock and her husband began to search for new, better uses for it.

### An Old College in a New Home

The war years intervened and decisions were delayed, but, after much discussion among family members and college, church, and civic leaders, it was finally determined that Wake Forest College would be moved to this land at Reynolda from Wake Forest, N.C. Once again, Mr. Sears would be called upon. Now, he would not be expected to be the visionary planner he was in the early days. The architect Jens Frederick Larson would design the entire project, including walkways and roads. Mr. Sears would only advise and assist.

Mr. Larson had achieved acclaim for his designs for college campuses. He had designed parts of the Dartmouth College campus and the entire campuses of Bucknell University and Colby College. He had written a highly regarded book, *Architectural Planning of the American College,* in 1933. For the Reynolda campus, he designed stately buildings, in the Georgian Revival style, arranging them within a system of courtyards, plazas, and vistas, all clustered on one hundred acres at the center of the 320-acre parcel.

The changes and additions to the Larson plan that Mr. Sears suggested seem relatively minor. Notes on his 1955 plans show that he wanted to soften some of the edges, remove some walls, and change or widen roadways. He noted that the elms were already planted to the east of the chapel, with six planted nearby that could be used as replacements, or, if not needed, could become permanent there. He added little in the way of planting. His plant lists were short and notes succinct. He specified willow oaks to line the driveway that encircles the core of the campus; thirty were planted in the spring of 1955. He did not explain on the plans why he chose these trees or their placement. He did not say why he wanted "squatty" ones at the driveway entrances or why he created simple arrangements of bold, structural evergreens at the entrances to the chapel, Reynolda Hall, and the library. On the new campus, there was to be none of the extensive, complex planting we have come to associate with Thomas Sears' residential, and some of his institutional and civic, designs. We would need to look elsewhere to find clues to his thinking.

By the early 1950s, Thomas Sears was firmly established as a leader in both private and institutional landscape planning. He was so well respected, in fact, that *Architecture and Design*, a monthly publication of Architectural Catalog Co., had devoted two entire issues to his work. In the 1937 issue, there are two photographs of Pennsylvania State College, showing a campus that is similar in appearance to the new Wake Forest. Under one of them, the caption reads "Old Main enhanced by dignified planting." In the 1953 issue, a photograph of St. Christopher's Church in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania, is captioned, "Dignified planting at church entrance." In both cases, the plantings were designed to add to the sense of grandeur of the buildings, not compete with or obscure them. This seems to have been his intent at Wake Forest.

We can see then, that most of the extensive and beautiful plantings we enjoy today on the Reynolda campus are not the direct result of the work of Thomas Sears, but his legacy there may be much more profound than early plans would suggest. On his 1955 plan for a "Portion of the Grounds West of the Men's Dormitories," he listed a variety of trees, mostly native to the region, including red maple, flowering dogwood, chest-

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# Plants for Collectors: The Genus Lycoris

*by* **Preston Stockton**, *RGWFU manager*

My South Carolina grandmother loved plants and had a wonderful garden full of all kinds of neat plants. I have a very early recollection of my mother and grandmother going out into her garden and digging up a clump of bulbs for us to bring back to Winston-Salem. I was so surprised when my mother told me that they were "Naked Ladies." Did she say naked? What in the world would the neighbors think? I was beginning to think that those rumors about my mother being a wild woman in her younger days were true. But plant them she did, and in late August of the next year, several flower stalks emerged from the ground with clusters of beautiful, pink flowers. But there were no leaves, really no plant at all. The stalks were sitting out in the garden, well, naked. I laugh now when I remember my first association with *Lycoris squamigera,* the infamous Naked Lady.

*L. squamigera* is also called resurrection lily, surprise lily, or magic lily. It is a beautiful plant with sturdy flower stalks that grow to two feet. At the top is a cluster of six to twelve trumpet-shaped, pink flowers, three inches long. The strap-like leaves eventually come up in late winter and die back by late May.

Another *Lycoris* that my mother grew was the spider lily, *L. radiata*. The flowers are red-orange with reflexed tepals. (When the sepals and petals of a flower are indistinguishable, they are referred to as tepals.) The stamen is twice as long as the tepals. The foliage is finer than *L. squamigera* but emerges soon after it blooms and persists throughout the winter. This plant has been grown so widely throughout the South that Elizabeth Lawrence, a well-known North Carolina garden writer, referred to it as a "dooryard flower." *L. radiata* is also known as the hurricane lily, as it blooms at the height of the hurricane season, or schoolhouse lily, since it blooms in early September when the kids head back to school. When I was in school at UNC-Chapel Hill, I loved to walk through the Coker Arboretum in September and see the hundreds of spider lilies blooming in the borders. What a beautiful sight! When I came to work at Reynolda, I was very pleased to see them naturalized throughout the woods. This plant is a sterile triploid, preventing it from forming seeds, so it must be propagated through division.

The *Lycoris* genus is a member of the amaryllis family and is native to eastern Asia. The name commemorates a Roman actress who was a mistress of Marc Antony. Both of these

*Lycoris radiata*, planted by Dr. Walter Flory in the 1960s, blooms in this spot near the front gate in September.

species of *Lycoris* have been grown since ancient times in China and Japan, particularly around temples, graveyards, and cultivated fields. They have been grown in the U.S. since the early 1800s. They have naturalized throughout the southern U.S. and are considered an heirloom plant.

In many of the languages and local dialects of China, *Lycoris* species have common names that translate as "stone garlic," referring to their onion-like bulbs; however, all species are poisonous. *L. radiata* is called "Chung Kwai fa" in Cantonese, referring to the legendary Chinese ghost-catcher, Chung Kwai. Legend has it that anyone who mistakenly eats it for garlic and dies will have their ghost captured by Chung Kwai. Today in Japan, *L. radiata* is thought to possess the soul of the dead and is not widely cultivated. Bulbs of all *Lycoris* contain the alkaloid lycorine, which causes vomiting, diarrhea, or convulsions. Although the bulbs are considered to have low toxicity, homeowners should be aware of the poisonous potential, particularly if small children and pets are present. On the other hand, this poisonous component has the benefit of making *Lycoris* resistant to damage from deer and rodents. Another alkaloid component is galantamine, which is used in medications to treat Alzheimer's-type dementia. *Lycoris* is being grown in plantations in China for mass harvest to extract this compound.

*L. squamigera* is hardy to Zone 5, while *L. radiata* is generally hardy to Zone 7. Allen Lacy, in his fine book *The Garden in Autumn*, bemoans the fact that he can not grow *L. radiata* in his garden in southern New Jersey. Isn't it so often the case that gardeners covet what they cannot grow?

The fact that the foliage emerges after *Lycoris* blooms is an interesting feature. This is an adaptation of the species to sur-

vive in areas with moist springs and periods of summer drought. This makes it a good plant for our area. *Lycoris* is easy to grow in full or partial shade and does well in almost any well-drained garden soil. Bulbs do not like to be disturbed so, if they are growing well, leave them alone as long as possible. Digging them up to move or divide can often result in their refusal to bloom for several years.

Both of these *Lycoris* can be found growing near many older homes throughout the southeastern U.S. Interestingly, they are not widely grown in nurseries, and it may be challenging to find them. The bulbs are more likely to be available in summer and fall from better garden centers as well as some mail-order nurseries. Unusual species and hybrids may be found at specialty bulb nurseries or from collectors and hybridizers; I have found several listings on eBay. Be sure to plant them as soon as you get them. If you are lucky enough to have a friend who is willing to share, dig the bulbs after the flowers fade and replant as soon as possible. They will sulk a season or two, but have patience and give them time to adjust. You will be rewarded with years of beautiful flowers in late summer when you really need a gardening boost.

## Thomas Sears, Four Decades at Reynolda

*Continued from page 7*

nut oak, white pine, and Canadian hemlock. He directed that new plantings should be incorporated into the existing woodland. By these few comments, we are reminded of his early days at Reynolda, when he directed the forester to help restore a landscape damaged by poor farming practices and years of construction by bringing native trees in from the woods to enrich ragged woodland edges, create natural-looking copses, and highlight the beauty of the native flora.

Thomas Sears was seventy-five years old when he submitted his last plan to Wake Forest College. By then, the landscape of the new campus had been cleared of most vegetation and the natural contours altered. Most of the construction had been completed, but the land looked raw, much as it had in the early twentieth century. After four decades of association with Reynolda, and nearing the end of a long career, he was still thinking about how to heal a landscape and restore its natural beauty for the benefit of future generations.

## Happy Hundredth Birthday, Reynolda!

The purchase of 104 acres of land on September 6, 1906, marked the beginning of the Reynolda estate, which eventually totaled over a thousand acres. The property, located near the intersections of Oaklawn Avenue, Coliseum Drive, and Stratford Road, was bought from Mary and O.B. Eaton.

A worker planting a willow oak, spring, 1955.
*Courtesy of the Lloyd Winchell Biebigheiser Collection, Wake Forest University Special Collections & Archives*

# Choosing Roses for Beauty and Meaning

*by* **John Kiger**, *RGWFU assistant manager*

Almost everyone who visits Reynolda Gardens invariably finds their way to the All-America Rose Selections (AARS) Garden. Every spring, the 800-plus rose bushes burst into a plethora of colors and continue flowering until frost. To put it simply, the first flush of blooms is quite breathtaking, and the visiting public takes advantage by coming out for leisurely strolls.

Having worked at Reynolda Gardens for nearly fourteen years, it doesn't take much to notice when someone has found a rose that piques their interest. It may be the color, or it could be the fragrance, but usually it's the color that stops them. So many times have I heard, "Oh, this pink one is my favorite!" If you like the color, the fragrance is an added bonus.

Just as certain songs are known to do, roses can trigger long-forgotten memories, maybe of a first love, a wedding, or possibly the celebration of a newborn child; only the admirer knows for sure. Speaking from experience, red roses trigger pleasant memories in my mind's eye that were formed long ago.

Roses, as we all know, are generally given to convey some type of sentiment, whether it is love, gratitude, happiness, or celebration of a new life. Whatever the reason, it is appropriate to know which color to send in order to relay that special meaning. Of course I've given roses to those special in my life but never realized that different colors take on a special meaning. That's not to say I was totally clueless. I am aware, as are most people, that red roses proclaim to the recipient, in no uncertain terms, "I love you." This is why I say it is a good idea to know the meaning of some of the colors. Who wants to send the wrong message? Listed in the next column is a small sampling of rose colors, along with their meaning. Hopefully, you already know these better than I did before doing my research.

**Yellow**
I begin with this one, because I found it to be most odd. Originally, the yellow rose indicated jealously. I don't know why exactly, and I can't imagine sending someone yellow roses to let them know you are jealous. The good news is that has all changed. In the course of romance, pure yellow roses are not a good choice. They are, however, excellent to give as a token of joy and gladness, whether it be for friendships, graduations, newlyweds, or new mothers. Simply put, giving yellow roses indicates a new beginning. If you wish to go a step further, yellow roses with red tips indicate a friendship blossoming into love.

**White**
Hailed as the "flower of light," white symbolizes innocence, purity, truth, happiness, and spiritual love.

**Coral**
Implies that the sender's heart is alive with desire.

**Deep pink**
Perfect for showing gratitude.

**Pale pink**
Also good for showing gratitude, but also portrays grace and gentleness.

**Peach**
Sympathy, appreciation, and gratitude.

**Orange**
The sender is proclaiming great enthusiasm, with a hint of desire.

**Lilac**
The recipient of this should know that the sender has fallen in love at first sight and is totally infatuated.

**Red**
Need I say it? A dozen red roses say "I love you," but eighteen say "I'm sorry." One amusing comment in an article I read spoke of receiving a single red rose. It stated, "A single red rose means 'I love you,' but I'm not going broke telling you."

Some roses take on a different meaning when combined with others. Two roses, such as a red and white, might say "I love you," and there is a certain amount of innocence. On the other hand, it could be given to indicate a marriage is in the near future. As you can see, it gets complicated, at least for me. Every time I have sent roses to someone, the meaning of the color never entered my mind, unless of course, as I stated earlier, they were red. I knew exactly what that one meant, but as for the others, I had no clue.

Being a gardener at Reynolda Gardens, I enjoy walking through the rose garden and looking at each variety. I do have my favorites, as I'm sure the other employees do as well. These would all be good choices for a home garden. Then you could make your own bouquets.

- In the pale pink or light pink category, I prefer Lady Elise May, First Light, Sweet Inspiration, and Simplicity.
- Dark pink favorites are Prima Donna, Fame, and Cynthia.
- Moondance, a 2007 AARS winner, is my preference for white.
- Orange is simple; it's Livin' Easy. Not only is it a beautiful rose, but I like what the name implies as well.
- These two rank very high in my personal favorites: Olympiad, which is a dark red, and Sunflare, which is yellow.
- Last, but not least, the one that truly catches my attention is a yellow rose with hints of red, appropriately named Gold Medal.

Okay, let me test myself. If I were sending someone roses, and I picked a light pink and a dark pink arrangement, I would be expressing gratitude. Sounds easy, but I bet I have to refer to this article quite often.

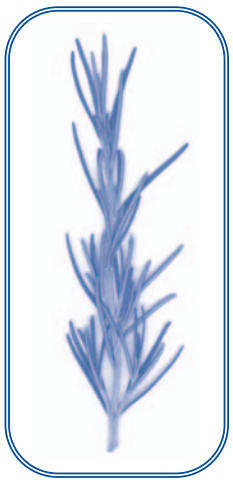
**Millie found a bit of shade in the greenhouse during one of the hot summer days.**

## The Right Rosemary for You

*Continued from page 5*

### Tips on Growing Rosemary

It is tempting to say there are no rules for growing rosemary, it's that easy, but here are a few things to keep in mind:



- It should only be planted in the spring. Fall planting does not give the plant time to establish roots before winter sets in.
- Like most Mediterranean plants, it likes to be high and dry. Be sure to plant it in a soil that drains well and is rich with organic compost; this will suit it fine. If you have wet summers, try adding small gravel to the soil and raising your rosemary up; getting it off the ground level will help to reduce humidity and greatly improve drainage.
- Don't crowd your plants. With a few exceptions, they are large and need space. This is especially important in humid summers, because it allows air to move more freely around the plant.
- If your rosemary is already planted and you want to improve the soil, add a layer of compost three to four inches deep around the base of the plant.
- Rosemary can be left in its natural form, or it can be pruned to almost any shape. Be sure to prune it only after it has bloomed; as new growth occurs, flower buds for the next year are already being set.

The many references to rosemary throughout history are proof of what a great plant it really is. Just pop a few in your home garden or as an herbal landscape screening, and in no time that spicy, calming, piney scent will carry you away. Before you know it, you'll be humming Simon and Garfunkel music and longing to watch *The Graduate*.

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*For a list of sources for plants mentioned in* The Gardener's Journal, *please send a SASE to Reynolda Gardens, 100 Reynolda Village, Winston-Salem, NC 27106.*

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# Snapshots from The Children's Garden

The brightly colored foliage of the coleus borders enhances the garden in the summer. Rooted cuttings will be shared with children in the fall school program.

This garden is planted by children who participate in school and summer programs. The Young Naturalists established a garden that is a haven for birds and insects.

Children made decorative labels for plants, including the zinnia 'Persian Carpet'.

Unfortunately, the shady corner will soon be lost. This sugar maple tree, which was already here in the 1920s, was badly damaged in a summer storm and will be removed this fall.

One small corner of the garden is packed with fennel, milkweed, and other plants for butterflies.

Wake Forest University

Reynolda Gardens

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