

The *Reynolda Gardens*
of Wake Forest University

Gardener's

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2010

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Most Wanted—NOT!

by Preston Stockton, RGWFU manager

I'm a Winston-Salem native and grew up close enough to Wiley Junior High to walk to school. Even as a child, plants caught my attention. Or maybe it was just a way to delay the school day. Along my route to school was a bank of well-manicured English ivy, and in it grew the most amazing vine. In the fall it would have incredibly beautiful berries—white, blue, purple, turquoise, and their variants—all in the same cluster. I would pick them and put them in my pocket to look at during the day. Who would know that these two oh-so-innocent-looking plants growing together, English ivy and turquoise vine, would come back to haunt me here at Reynolda!

In May, 2010 the Jaeger Company, a landscape architecture firm from Gainesville, Georgia, that specializes in historic landscapes, finished the Cultural Landscape Report for the Reynolda Estate. This report will help guide the caretakers of the landscape of Reynolda House Museum of American Art

Cicada Killers: Nature's Body-snatchers

by David Bare, RGWFU greenhouse manager

I was working in the garden one day last summer when something the size of a Volkswagen flew by. Well, maybe I exaggerate a bit, but when something large and incongruous goes floating by, it catches your eye. I am used to seeing the darting about of hummingbirds in the high summer garden; the aerobatic maneuvers of the three inch bird are a common sight in gardens then. But this was a labored flight, a Cicada Killer laden with prey.

The Cicada Killer is one of the largest North American wasps, at almost two inches in length. Its prey, the Eastern Cicada, is nearly equal its size. Much confusion surrounds both of these insects. The Cicada Killer is locally referred to as a Japanese Hornet. Though it has relatives in Australia, this wasp is of North American origin. It looks more like a hornet than a wasp and is commonly confused with the European Hornet, an imported insect that can grow to a little over an inch in length. Add to the confusion the befuddlement surrounding this insect's prey, the cicada. There are periodic cicadas (both thirteen and seventeen year cycles) and annual cicadas. They are commonly called locusts because of their plague-like, periodic invasions.

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Designing Reynolda, Part 2 Horatio Buckenham, Revisited

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

In the last issue, I introduced Horatio Robert Buckenham, a partner in the firm of Buckenham and Miller, who was responsible for much of the earliest design of Reynolda. A native of England, he was recorded in the 1910 federal census, along with his wife, daughter, and business partner, Louis L. Miller, in Somerville, New Jersey. At the end of the article, I said that I had been unable to find more information and would discuss Mr. Miller in this issue.

But I continued my search for information and finally was able to find someone I believed might be Mr. Buckenham's granddaughter*. I sent her a letter, and, a few days later, a package arrived, containing a letter and the photographs shown here. She confirmed her identity by saying, "He was born October 6, 1854; he died April 18, 1941 and is buried in the cemetery of Jessop Methodist Church, Sparks, Maryland."

In reading the letter and in a subsequent telephone conversation with her, as well as documentation from other sources, I learned that her mother was born in England to the Buckenham's close friends, who both died very young, and she was adopted by the Buckenham's at the age of eight or nine. She remained in boarding school in England through most of her childhood.

About twenty-six years younger than her husband, Mrs. Buckenham was an opera singer known professionally by her middle

name, Rheta. Her arrival on the ocean liner, Oceanic, on May 9, 1909, was noted in the New York Times. "Miss (sic) Rheta Buckenham, an English singer... expects to go with the Shubert forces here." **

A picture of the Buckenham's life can be seen in this comment from the letter: "Throughout my early youth, my grandparents traveled extensively—spending much time in England since Granddad loved his native land (never became an American citizen). Because of their travel, I didn't have much personal contact with them until they permanently settled in Baltimore and I was in high school. I remember Granddad as an austere Englishman with little interest in my high school activities. After greeting me, he'd disappear to his hothouse with his dog, Buddy, and his plants and landscaping plans."



Mr. Buckenham in Boston

One of the photographs, stamped Chickering Studios, Boston, proved to be the starting place for further discovery of Mr.



Buckenham's career and his life in America. Because the studio was known for photographing prominent people, such a portrait reflected a high social status. A hunch and another search led to discovery of an explanation of his presence in Boston. He was employed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Company, which was located in Brookline, Mass. Best known

for the design of Central Park in New York and Biltmore Estate in Asheville, N.C., the firm was responsible for the designs of hundreds of other landscapes, including parks, school campuses, and private estates. Landscapes were often modeled on the classic English park, incorporating sweeping, pastoral scenes; winding roads;

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Summer 2010 Favorites

by Michelle Hawks, RGWFU horticulturist

As a child, I watched the cartoon character Popeye squeeze a can of spinach open with one bare hand and inhale it in one big gulp. Within moments he would be transformed into a muscle-bound hero ready to save his pencil-thin girlfriend, Olive Oyl. I was convinced back then if I were to eat my spinach, I'd have muscles just like Popeye and protect myself and my little brother from the school bus bully. There were a few problems with that theory, mostly having to do with not being able to get past the look or taste of spinach.

Strawberry Spinach

This plant could change the mind of anyone who dislikes spinach. Strawberry spinach, a leafy, green plant that grows between one and three feet tall at maturity, was something new for us this year, and it turned out to be a very prolific plant. It is best to harvest the young leaves when the plant is about ten to twelve inches tall and eat them raw in salads or cooked the same way you would any other spinach. The leaves have a walnut taste that can add a special flavor to a salad. Besides the edible leaf, this plant bears a sweet, red berry at the plant's leaf axil. These berries are also edible and can be eaten raw or cooked, even used as natural red dye for food coloring. The combination of green leaves and red berries makes it a unique plant that can add interest to your container gardens or as a companion plant. Strawberry spinach is one of the best kept secrets in the garden world. It's always so nice when you can use almost the entire plant instead of just one part.

African Marigolds

I never liked the smell of marigolds, but I do like the showy flowers of the African marigolds that John decided to use this year, plus the fact that they practically care for themselves. One thing for sure is that they are robust.

African marigold flower colors range from light yellow to orange. Of course some African marigold plants produce gold flora, hence the name marigold. The blooming period can last from the beginning of summer all the way until initial frost. The plant has been around for a long time. It is incredible that such a beautiful flower is easy to grow and gives the gardener a long period of enjoyment.

The mistake we made was not staking them, so they were constantly falling over. Beware, gardeners, this marigold's height reaches a gigantic four feet. So get your bamboo stakes out for these beautiful, showy plants.



Peppers

When gardeners choose to grow sweet or bell peppers, a whole new world is opened up to them. Peppers are right behind tomatoes as darlings in the home vegetable garden. Peppers offer all sorts of colors, shapes, sizes, and flavors. They're used for such a wide variety of culinary dishes, and they're also easy to grow. Another advantage peppers have over other vegetables is that they adapt very well to being grown in small spaces and containers, making them accessible to anyone who wants to plant them.

Baby Belle peppers are bitesize, red and yellow, sweet bell peppers that are cute and delicious, very colorful in salads, and easy and nutritious, quick snacks. Doesn't that sound wonderful? I thought so, too. These peppers were very heavy producers. You will see these peppers in the garden again!

Oregano

Many different kinds of oreganos form beautiful shrubs or groundcovers, but none ever

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Buzzards: A Vital Part of Nature

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

*B*uzzards, correctly called vultures, can be seen daily, effortlessly gliding through the skies. At Reynolda, I've seen them circling the meadow and the formal garden. Does that mean we have a carcass somewhere on the premises? Not necessarily. Contrary to popular belief, circling vultures don't always indicate the presence of a dead animal—sometimes the birds are simply playing. Vultures, you see, are very social and fun-loving animals. They just love groups and can often be seen roosting in groups of several hundred, called a wake, by the way.

In general, vultures are categorized as New World and Old World. Old World vultures are members of the family Accipitridae, which includes eagles, kites, and hawks. Found in Africa, Asia, and Europe, they find their prey exclusively by sight. New World vultures, commonly called buzzards, are members of the family Cathartidae, which also includes condors and storks. Unlike Old World vultures, which have strong beaks and feet with sharp, hooked claws, New World vultures have weak beaks and feet that resemble those of a chicken. New World vultures range from Canada to the southernmost tip of South America. The Turkey Buzzard is the most abundant of these and is the most common buzzard in North Carolina, living in open areas, such as grasslands and wetlands.

The Turkey Buzzard, so called because the reddish, featherless head resembles that of the turkey, is a large, blackish-brown bird with long, narrow wings that appear light in color when viewed from underneath. It averages two to three feet in length, weighs from three to five pounds, and has a wing span of up to six feet. It has no syrinx or voice box and is silent except for hissing and grunting. Basically a scavenger, it is unable to kill its prey and feeds on dead animals or carrion, as well as insects, vegetation, and, strangely



enough, pumpkins. The Turkey Buzzard uses its incredible sense of smell, something most birds, including other vultures, don't have to find carrion. With the largest olfactory system of all birds, it locates a meal by detecting the gasses produced by decay, often within twenty-four hours of the animal's death. The turkey buzzard is unable to rip through an animal hide and must rely on other predators to do so, or it must wait until the carcass breaks open naturally. It eats on the ground, as its weak talons prevent it from carrying food in the air. With this bird, it is feast or famine; consequently, it may eat up to twenty percent of its weight at one meal.

The Turkey Buzzard's body is uniquely adapted to its diet. The bald head remains clean during feeding and doesn't serve as a breeding ground for bacteria. The stomach contains an exceptionally corrosive acid, allowing the bird to safely eat carcasses infected with botulism toxin, hog cholera, rabies, and anthrax. By urinating on its feet, the Turkey Buzzard kills bacteria accumulated from walking through carcasses. That said, it is a very clean bird that loves to bathe in water and spends two to three hours per day preening.

Turkey Buzzards mate for life and produce one clutch a year in the spring. The female lays one to three eggs, whitish with brown splotches around the large end, on the ground in a slight depression or in a hollow log or an old building. Both parents incubate the eggs, which hatch after thirty-four to forty-one days. The nestlings are covered in fine, white down and have a gray face. Again, both parents tend their chicks, feeding them by regurgitation. The chicks stay in the nest for ten to twelve weeks but may remain in a family group until the next breeding season. The family group is very affectionate with one another.

Most Wanted — NOT!

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and Reynolda Village, as well as Reynolda Gardens. One of the issues addressed in the report is the serious problem of invasive plants in the woodlands of Reynolda, one that we have long worried about but a difficult one to address with such a small staff and over a hundred acres to maintain. We have spent many winters whacking ivy off of border logs on the trails and cutting ivy off of trees. But this report brings this issue to the forefront.

Thomas Sears was a fine designer and plantsman, which is evident from his expansive plant palette used throughout Reynolda. Unfortunately, many of the plants that he selected have been too happy and have naturalized throughout the estate. In my Winter 2006 issue of *Gardener's Journal* article, available on the Gardens website, I discussed the tremendous problem with English ivy, *Hedera helix*, spreading throughout the woods, choking out native plants in the understory, and climbing up the trunks of the trees.

The turquoise vine, *Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*, which Mr. Sears used on several arbors at Reynolda, has berries that are a delightful dish for the birds, which spread them far and wide. Besides growing through the woods here, it has naturalized all through neighborhoods surrounding Reynolda. (I wonder if my childhood plant made it all the way from Reynolda to Runnymede Park.) We also pull up hundreds every year in the formal gardens. If I had a nickel for all the ones I have pulled in the last thirty years, I would be sitting on the beach right now with a good book and a cold soda!

Other plants that were planted here and have naturalized into the woods are autumn olive, *Elaeagnus umbellata*; several bush honeysuckles, *Lonicera maackii podocarpa*, *L. korolkowii*, *L. morrowii*, *L. x bella albida*; California privet, *Ligustrum ovalifolium*; mahonia, *Mahonia bealei*; princess tree, *Paulownia tomentosa*; and Chinese parasol tree, *Firmiana simplex*. Besides plants that Mr. Sears used in the ornamental plantings, we have also

had many non-native plants come in from other areas. These include mimosa, *Albizia julibrissin*; tree-of-heaven, *Ailanthus altissima*; Japanese honeysuckle, *Lonicera japonica*; and kudzu, *Pueraria montana*.

Last winter we began working in several areas eradicating these pests. North of the front gate, we cleared an area overtaken with honeysuckle, privet, and turquoise vine, as well as the native, poison ivy. We also brought in a bush hog to begin reclaiming the woodland edges along the meadow. The vines quickly grow back beginning in the spring, so the staff and a very industrious volunteer have done their best to keep these areas cut back and sprayed, so initial work will not be wasted. It was an interesting juggling act to keep up with this and normal summer activities.

We have acres upon acres of ivy and other invasive species that we will be eradicating in the future. Our goal will be determining the best way to do this using the safest procedures. We know that we will have to rely on the use of herbicides but hope to use the safest ones possible, both to plants and humans. I'm sure there will be cutting, pulling, mowing, spraying, and probably a little cursing! But the result will hopefully be the return of the beautiful woods here at Reynolda. 🌱

Buzzards: A Vital Part of Nature

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So what about those circling birds we see overhead? That's simply buzzards riding pockets of warm air called thermals. By riding the thermals in a circular motion, sometimes as high as 20,000 feet, they can save energy, just in case food is not so plentiful. Among the most skilled gliders of American birds, a Turkey Buzzard can fly for six hours without flapping its wings. Plus, it's a great game to play with other buzzards! 🌱

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Growing Peanuts

by John Kiger, RGWFO assistant manager

The field appeared massive to an eight year old boy. As I stood there with my father, grandmother, and Uncle Oliver, I remember asking, "What's growing?"

"Peanuts," replied Uncle Oliver.

"Can I have some?" I asked.

He laughed, bent down, and pulled a plant from the ground and shook off the dirt, exposing what looked like hundreds of peanuts to me. In actuality, there were probably only twenty or so. "Try one," he said.

I reached out and picked one off. The shell was soft, but I managed to get it open and popped the peanut in my mouth. I have always loved raw peanuts, but this one tasted awful. It was then that he showed me the building where he stored dried peanuts from last year's crop. While standing inside, he explained the growing and drying process, while I loaded my pockets.

Living in Yadkin County, my uncle had grown peanuts for years. I tried growing some myself at Reynolda Gardens in 1995 but had no luck at all. I have often heard people say that you can't grow peanuts in this area. I knew better. I decided this year to give it one more try.

How to Grow Peanuts

Native to South America, peanuts, which are in the legume family, require loose or sandy, well drained, deeply tilled soil that is high in organic matter. One of the easiest things

about growing your own peanuts is that you don't need a seed catalogue. Simply head to your nearest grocery store and purchase raw peanuts. Believe me, you will have enough to plant two acres unless you do like I do and eat them as you shell them. As with most warm season crops, plant after all danger of frost has passed. For best results, wait until soil temperatures reach a minimum of sixty-five degrees. Space your rows three feet apart. Once rows are placed, mix in organic material, such as mushroom compost, manure, or worm castings, to the top two inches of the row. Providing these nutrients now will reduce the amount of fertilizer applied in the future, if any is needed. Soaking the peanuts for two hours prior to planting will give them a jump start. Sow whole kernels (split ones will not grow) one to two inches deep and seven inches apart. Water in well at this point and do not water again until you see sprouts. If weeds are a concern, or your ground becomes too hard due to drying in the sun, mulch the rows with a leaf mulch.

In thirty-five to forty-five days, a tiny yellow flower develops within the foliage. Pollination and fertilization occur at this point. The plant produces what is referred to as a "peg." Once the peg penetrates the ground, which takes about ten days, the peg tip begins to swell and, from this, peanuts are formed. It is critical at this point to cultivate around the plants. Gently pull soil around the plants and remove weeds, but take care not to disturb the pegs. They will be quite visible. They resemble tiny, curved sticks.

Peanuts require a long growing season, generally around four to five months. In early fall the foliage will begin to yellow. Harvest the plants by either pulling them out by hand or using a potato fork. Once they are out of the ground, shake off any excess soil; do not wash them off. Hang the plants in a tool shed or garage for two weeks. After this period, shake off any remaining soil and remove the nuts from the plants. Place the peanuts on a wire mesh for another two weeks to dry completely. Once dry, you have a choice: eat them raw, boiled, or roasted. I prefer raw.

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Cicada Killers: Nature's Body-snatchers

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The Eastern Cicada Killer is black with yellow banding on its lower body. The head and translucent wings are a rusty orange. They nest in holes they dig in loose, sandy, gravelly soils. We see them nest at Reynolda Gardens in the bluestone paths around the rose garden. The wasp digs a hole much like a dog would, kicking the soil with her legs and shoveling it out with her abdomen. The tunnels may extend six inches into the ground and another six inches to the side. Generally wasps occupy these tunnels individually; they are a solitary species, though several may be seen occupying nearby territory. There have been reported incidents of Cicada Killers sharing the same burrow, though presumably not the same nesting chamber underground. Conversely, battles can break out between females competing for the same burrow.

Beyond the six inch tunnel, a branching network of brood tunnels extends. The wasp provisions each cell with one or two cicadas. If the egg being laid is a female, the wasp supplies two cicadas; if a male, one. In a natural history fit for making into a horror movie, the cicada is paralyzed by the sting of the wasp but remains alive in the nest chamber. The egg is always carefully placed under the cicada's left or right second leg. It is theorized that this placement avoids the twitching of the paralyzed insect that might remove the egg if placed in another location. When the wasp larva hatches, it begins to tunnel its way into the internal organs of the cicada, carefully avoiding the nervous system of the insect to keep the victim alive. In instances where the cicada has died, the larvae will also perish, usually from the invasion of molds.

The larva begins to spin a cocoon after it has eaten the cicada. It will overwinter in this cocoon and hatch in the spring. Males hatch first and begin the watch for females, who will emerge a few weeks later. Sometimes this can result in an frantic mass of

males attempting to mate with the newly emerged female, but the female wasp will only mate once, with one male, and reject any further advances. The female will then carry on her nest building and reproductive habits for her two to six week above-ground lifespan. Given their menacing size and habit of nesting in open areas often occupied by humans, these wasps are considered a nuisance species by some. Occasionally large colonies can occupy open residential ground. We might consider their habits alien and disgusting, but these insects are providing a beneficial service in controlling large populations of a species known for its destructive egg-laying in the branches of trees. Cicada Killers are generally fairly docile creatures, though the males will investigate any infringement into their territory; it takes great provocation to induce a Cicada Killer to sting. Nonetheless, few of us will tolerate large stinger-equipped wasps hovering over the homefront. Common insecticides can be employed to remove them. This is not an endorsement for this practice. The entire nesting cycle will last three to four weeks and be done. Tolerance is the best course of action. 🌱

Summer 2010 Favorites

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

struck me as truly awesome until we grew Kent Beauty.

It is a semi-trailing, semi-mounding groundcover with grey-green, silver-veined, oval to nearly heart-shaped leaves. The flowers are quite something in summer and autumn, appearing in great numbers. They are first mauve but age to a bright pink and purple. These blooms consist of pink-petaled flowers inside dust-purple bracts that make the flowers look larger than they really are.

These are a few of the new plants we tried this year, but, by far, the pepper was my favorite. 🌱

Ms. Earline King
Mr. and Mrs. Bill Merwin

Honorarium

In honor of Susan Andrews
By Flowers and Friends Garden Club

In honor of David Bare
By Flowers and Friends Garden Club
Forest Garden Club
Lewisville Garden Club
Old Salem Garden Club
Winston-Salem Judges Council

In honor of Mrs. Shelby Chadon
By Michael and Ramelle Pulitzer

In honor of Slade and Pat Howell
By Hampton and Jennifer Howell

In honor of Donna and Tom Lambeth
By Mr. and Mrs. Gray Smith

In honor of Cynthia Leonard upon her retirement
By Pam Kahl

In honor of Ms. Sally McLeod
By Mr. Leonard Orłowski

In honor of Jim Nottke
By Bermuda Run Garden Club

In honor of Reynolda Gardens Staff
By Anonymous

In honor of Robin Weisner
By Mrs. Cindy Weisner

Memorium

In memory of Dottie Crone
By Mr. George W. Crone, Jr.

In memory of Mary Baucom Driscoll
By Mr. Frank E. Driscoll

In memory of Susan Getty
By Mrs. Carol Dimling

In memory of June Byrd Grimes
By Mr. and Mrs. Charles F. Neal II

In memory of Julie Lambeth
By Dr. William A. Lambeth

In memory of Andrea Logan Rogers
By Ms. Jane Logan Rogers

Restricted

Young Naturalist Scholarships
By Book Club Anon
Margaret Savoca and Bruce Bradford
JoAnn and Bryan Yates

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Designing Reynolda, Part 2 Horatio Buckenham

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artificial lakes; and naturalistic woodlands. A search of his name in the firm's records revealed a series of plans and correspondence, beginning in 1875 and lasting until 1897. He worked on the Arnold Arboretum; multiple parks and park systems in several cities; several schools; estates, including Florham, the home of Hamilton McKay and Florence Twombly in Madison, N.J.***; and the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. In some records he is described as Draughtsman; in others, as Artist/Creator. And, his name appears in another record. "Horatio Buckenham, landscape architect," appears in the Boston City Directory in 1895. 🌱

**Her name is withheld to preserve her privacy.*

***The Shubert Theatrical Company of New York was the premier theatrical company of the day. Although most of her career was in England, Mrs. Buckenham was born in Baltimore, Maryland.*

****See the Winter 1998 Gardener's Journal on the Gardens website for a discussion of the Florham daylily, which originated on that estate, and was planted at Reynolda.*

Growing Peanuts

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This is one plant that is truly interesting to grow. Since I planted mine, I have counted the days to see if the information I gathered from my research was correct. On August 4, 2010, the pegs were visible, touching, but not in the ground yet, but they were there. Looking back on 1995, my biggest mistake was not giving them the time required to grow. I suppose it's true, you gain patience as you get older. 🌱



PORTRAIT OF
HORATIO
BUCKENHAM,
CHICKERING
STUDIOS, BOSTON.
DATE UNKNOWN.



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