

The *R* EYNOLDA *G* ARDENS  
of Wake Forest University

# Gardener's

JOURNAL

Spring  
2015

## The John Hope Franklin Orchid

by Preston Stockton,  
RGWFU manager

Several years ago, I received a call from Constance Gray, a longtime friend of Reynolda Gardens, who said she had a project with which she needed assistance. Connie then began to tell me the most interesting story about friendship, persistence, and patience.

Connie met John Hope Franklin, the highly esteemed African American historian and scholar, in 1996 when she went on the Duke Endowment board at Duke University. Connie said, "John Hope Franklin gave me the gift of his friendship, and it was indeed one of the greatest gifts of my life. I was awed not only by his brilliance but by his humility, elegance, and dignity despite the injustice and prejudice he faced in his lifetime."

John Hope Franklin was born in Rentiesville, Oklahoma, on January 2, 1915. He attended Fisk University and later Harvard University where he earned his master's and doctorate degrees. Dr. Franklin wrote many books but is best known for his ground-breaking book *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*. He held faculty positions at Fisk, Harvard, Howard University, New York University, Cambridge University, and Duke University Law School. He was also active in the civil rights movement and participated in the 1965 voting rights march in Selma, Alabama.



In 1959, while he was living in Hawaii, Dr. Franklin began collecting orchids. Connie says that he loved their beautiful diversity of size, color, and fragrance. In 1976, the University of Chicago president, John T. Wilson, presented him with a phalaenopsis orchid, which was named in his honor. This hybrid was developed by Mr. and Mrs. Herman Pigors of Oak Hill Gardens and Greenhouses in Dundee, Illinois. It was white with a purple lip and can be seen in Dr. Franklin's portrait at the Perkins Library at Duke University. Unfortunately, this orchid, as well as the rest of his collection, was lost in 2003 when his greenhouse lost power one winter during an ice storm. When Connie learned of the loss of this beautiful hybrid, much prized by its namesake, she decided to try to re-create the John Hope Franklin phalaenopsis.

Growing orchids from seeds is a very long and involved process. Orchid seeds are incredibly tiny. One 500 mg. aspirin is the same weight as 500,000 seeds of some orchid species! Because they are so small, they have no stored food and must be started on sterilized gelatin, or agar, which provides the necessary nutrition for them to grow. Once they germinate, they are moved from the germination medium to a replant medium, typically in flasks. The whole process can take up to three years, but twelve to eighteen months is typical. To get them to bloom can take another four years. A daunting task but Connie Gray is one patient woman!

Connie began this journey in 2007 by consulting with Mark Rose of Breckinridge Orchids. The first step was to find the orchids that were used in the original cross — *P. 'Grace Palm'* and *P. 'Liese Pigors'*. Robert Bedard, a grower in Scotts County, California, provided a *P. 'Grace Palm'*, and Linda Thorne of Seagrove Orchids worked to arrange a cross with *P. 'Liese Pigors'*. Unfortunately, the first cross failed. Eventually, May Fu of May's Orchids in

## Pegging Roses

by Forrest Allred, RGWFU head horticulturist

When I discuss roses with the public and mention pegging roses, quite often I receive blank stares. It would appear that not many of us, including those who practice horticulture, have pegged roses or even heard of it.

Pegging roses is an old practice of training roses that are tall and leggy by nature and tend to flower on the tips of the canes (stems). It was used predominately during the Victorian Era (1837-1901) to maintain Hybrid Perpetuals. Today Hybrid Perpetuals, Albas, and Bourbons are classes of roses that are suitable for pegging.

Paul Zimmerman of Paul Zimmerman Roses describes pegging as "simply taking the arching canes of a large shrub rose and tying them back down to the ground, or even back to the plant itself." The end result is not only the management of a tall, leggy rose, but, as you train the rose horizontally, more flowers are produced along the canes vertically from nearly every leaf axil.

Pegging should be done either in the fall or prior to bud break in the late winter. If your garden is exposed and susceptible to harsh winter winds, consider pegging your roses in the fall to protect the canes from any damage. Start the process with established roses that are at least one year or older; otherwise, the canes may break. Every second or third year, remove older canes to make room for new pegs and to give yourself room to work. The canes will generally need to be five to seven feet long and flexible.

Here are three methods of pegging Paul Zimmerman recommends. With any of these methods, space should be considered. The horizontal method will generally take as much space as the length of the canes. If your garden is truly challenged by space, you should consider the crown shape or dome shape methods.

- The Horizontal method: Take the canes and stretch them along the ground, a few inches above the soil, either crisscrossing or in a cartwheel pattern and peg.



HORIZONTAL METHOD OF PEGGING

- The Crown shape method: Turn canes back into the middle of the plant. Tie off these canes to the center of the plant or peg in close proximity to the base of the rose.
- The Dome shape method: Take the canes and bend them over the center of the plant to the other side. Then tie each cane to itself or peg in close proximity to the base of the rose.

To peg with any of these methods, use aluminum hooks, bamboo hooks, or metal ground cloth staples that are twelve to fifteen inches long. When tying the canes back to their centers with the crown shape or dome shape method, you should use rubber tie ribbon. If the cane ends are touching the ground, they may need to be removed in the late winter to prevent dieback or rooting. After the flush of flowers on the canes fade, prune away one-third to one-half of lateral growth to a strong bud for repeat bloom. A flush of flowers can be expected during June and once more in late summer.

The opportunity to use pegged roses in the landscape is only limited by space and your own experimentation. Let me encourage you to be creative in your own garden with pegging roses. Some recommended varieties are:

- 'Baroness Rothschild' (1868) Hybrid Perpetual, four feet. Double, cupped blooms are a luscious cream-pink. Not much of a repeater, not fragrant, but one of the greatest of all time.
- 'Paul Neyron' (1869) Hybrid Perpetual, four to six feet. Soft pink, very fragrant, double blooms, up to seven inches in diameter. Constant bloomer.

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## Mess o' Greens

by John Kiger RGWPU assistant manager

It is hard to believe the year 2015 is upon us. As you rang in the New Year, did you make any resolutions or follow any traditions? As for resolutions, I always make a few, but they usually fall by the wayside and are forgotten by the end of January. Traditions are not as easily forgotten and vary from person to person. My family, for example, always gets together on Easter Sunday and the Sunday before Christmas. It is simply our tradition.

One tradition shared by Southerners in the United States is the consumption of collard greens and black-eyed peas on New Year's Day. Folklore, dating back to the Civil War, tells us that eating collards and black-eyed peas will bring good fortune in the coming year. Of course, the collard greens represent folding money, and the black-eyed peas represent coins. Other traditions involving collards that Southerners have handed down through the years include hanging a leaf over your door to keep out evil spirits and placing a fresh leaf on your forehead to cure a headache.

Collard greens, *Brassica oleracea*, were first known as a non-heading wild cabbage and have been in existence for over two thousand years. The history of this plant seems to have its origins on all continents. In fact, historians state they are "unsure of their exact origins," but research indicates the Romans introduced them to Europe, and the Celts familiarized them to the British Isles much later.

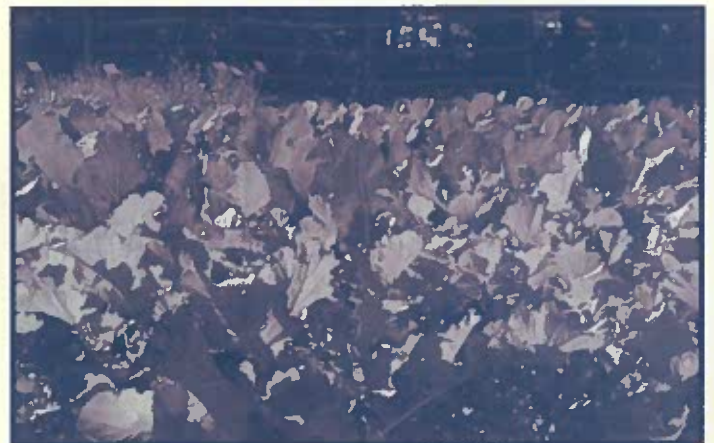
Explorers in 1565 found collards growing on the island of Hispaniola, which is nestled between Cuba and Puerto Rico. When African slave ships began to arrive in Virginia in 1619, collards were found producing well in the southern climate. As British colonists began to settle in the New World in the mid-1600's, they brought many types of vegetable seeds including collards.

So why grow collards? As with most greens, collards are an excellent source of nutrition. They're low in fat, calories, and sodium, making them a desirable choice for those who are dieting or looking for a healthy lifestyle. They also provide a constant food source for up to eight months, depending on when they are planted. I prefer getting them into the ground in mid-August. This allows the plant time to develop a strong root system before the autumn chill begins. If you wait until September, which I

have in the past, the plants are healthy but will rarely get above a foot tall, and the leaves will be much smaller. I have read articles that say they can grow in most any climate. While this may be true, I have found that if you plant them in the spring, the plants will most likely wilt in the heat of the summer, leaving you with a bitter-tasting leaf. These frost tolerant plants actually taste better once a frost has settled upon them because starches in the leaves turn to sugars. Winter temperatures in our area have a limited effect on collards. They will survive in temperatures of ten to fifteen degrees, but the plant's leaf production and growth will slow to a crawl. Harvesting can occur at any stage of the plant's growth. However, only one-fourth of the leaves should be taken to ensure the plant continues to flourish.

The two most common varieties I grow at Reynolda Gardens are 'Vates' and 'Georgia'. Both are excellent producers, but the distinguishing difference between these two varieties is in the height and the leaves. 'Georgia' reaches a height of two to three feet and produces a large, cabbage-like leaf with smooth edges. The 'Vates' variety is more compact and reaches a height of two feet. The leaves are generally smaller and somewhat wavy. As for taste? Some say 'Vates' has a better flavor or vice versa. Personally, I have no favorite; to me they both taste the same, cooked or raw.

Each year at Reynolda Gardens, I plant collards in the Fruit, Cut Flower, and Nicer Vegetable Garden designed by Thomas W. Sears in 1921. Collards were not part of Mr. Sears design; it has simply become our tradition. If you visit Reynolda Gardens from October through March, you may see a staff member harvesting the leaves. If you ask nicely, we may even send you home with a mess! 🍴



## A Thyme for Change

by Michelle Hawks, RGWFU horticulturist

I have known for some time that I wanted to make changes to the east herb garden. This area had poor drainage, which meant the plants were not healthy, and some were dying. In addition, it had been years since the herb garden had been renovated. These issues gave me the opportunity to redesign the area and amend the soil for healthier plants. Changing the herb garden also made it possible to showcase unique culinary and medicinal herbs and provide them for our plant sales.

In order to update the herb garden, I knew I first had to remove some plants and change the pathway, so that it would be more accessible for people to see, touch, and smell the herbs. Changing the pathway also created more space for new plants.

The first thing I had to consider was the soil condition. In my experience, the work you do amending the soil really pays off, and it had been years since I amended it. Soil drainage is probably the most important single factor in a successful herb garden. Since I knew this area was not draining well, I added PermaTill and organic material to prevent the herbs from having wet feet.

Once the soil was ready, it was time to make a plan. Before you do anything else, take a realistic look at how much time you are willing to spend in your garden and how much you want to grow and harvest. In the planning stage, you will also need to consider if you have enough sunshine. At least six hours of sunlight is best for herbs. Herb gardens are as varied as the personalities of their gardeners. Many herbs can be grown in containers. Interesting plants can make even the most boring containers look great.

After deciding how much time and space you have for a garden, lay out your garden on paper. Even the simplest garden will look better if it is planned before planting. Remember, it is easier to erase on paper than redo a whole garden.

Now that you have your layout on paper, it is time to decide what plants you want to grow. You can grow herbs for their function but also for their beauty. When looking for plants for our garden, I wanted to choose ones that

were valuable for their culinary and medicinal properties but were also unique. Researching plants was exciting, and I wanted to choose all of them, but I knew my space was limited.

I ordered my plants from Sandy Mush Herb Nursery, a mail-order nursery in Leicester, North Carolina. They have a wide variety of plants, which arrive in three to five inch pots. Some of the plants were very small, so I saved those to be planted in the spring to allow them more time to grow. However, I was able to go ahead and plant a few of the mints, oregano, and rosemary because they were bigger. It is my experience that it is best to plant perennial herbs in the spring or early summer because the plants will be better established by winter.

Redesigning the herb garden was a learning experience for me. I encourage you to start sketching your own garden plans and experiment with new plants when your garden is in need of a change.

I also want to invite you to come and see the newly designed herb garden. I always love suggestions about plants, and, by sharing, we can learn together.

A few of the new plants you will see in the herb garden are:

- ☘ *Thymus vulgaris* 'Dot Wells' – Dot Wells Thyme
- ☘ *Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Logee Blue' – Logee Blue Rosemary
- ☘ *Salvia elegans* 'Honeydew Melon' – Honeydew Melon Sage
- ☘ *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Jean Davis' – Jean Davis Lavender
- ☘ *Pelargonium x nervosum* 'Lime' – Lime-scented Geranium
- ☘ *Menthe x piperita* 'Grapefruit' – Grapefruit Mint
- ☘ *Salvia officinalis* 'Berggarten' – Berggarten Sage
- ☘ *Helichrysum microphyllum* – Dwarf Curry Plant



## Winter Operations at Reynolda Gardens

by Hayden Shuping, RGWFU greenhouse manager

Each year as summer draws to an end, the cold slowly but surely creeps in at Reynolda Gardens. The daily visitors are fewer as the temperatures steadily fall. The garden beds, full of life all season, are quieted by the first killing frost. A silence falls over Reynolda in the winter months. But as calm as it seems, winter for us here at the Gardens is not a time for sipping cocoa and sitting by the fire.

Late summer is the time when preparations for the next year are already underway. We start by inventorying the plants we grow that are not cold hardy in our area but that we want to keep for the next season. Over several days, we use this list to methodically make our way through the Gardens taking cuttings, making divisions, and sometimes digging up entire plants. We typically take around fifteen to twenty cuttings of each plant, which then go immediately into our propagation mist bed. There is a wide variety of annuals, tropical plants, and tender perennials that we grow yearly for sale and for use at Reynolda. Some of the "must haves" are Cape Plumbago, *Plumbago auriculata* (blue and white); Snail vine, *Vigna caracalla*; and the many different types of *Salvia*. The cuttings are all inspected for pests and diseases and are sized as consistently as possible. Divisions are smaller plants taken from "mother" plants that are then potted to be grown individually. They are separated from the mother plants and potted in the same day. Divisions include elephant ears, *Alocasia sp.* and *Colocasia sp.*; tropical bananas, *Musa sp.*; and annual purple fountain grass, *Pennisetum setaceum* 'Rubrum'. Hundreds of cuttings and divisions are completed before the deadline of first frost, which on average is mid-to-late October in the Piedmont.

After the cuttings are taken and the divisions made, there is still much work to be accomplished before spring. Within just a few weeks, some of the cuttings have developed roots and are ready to transplant from the propagation mist bed into individual containers. Depending on the type of plant and its growth rate, the size of the container is determined. The sizes range from small four inch pots to large three gallon pots. Once a plant is potted, an appropriate amount of slow release



PLANTS GROWING FOR THE SPRING

fertilizer is added to the top of the soil to steadily supply nutrients for good vigorous growth.

A greenhouse is an ideal environment for growing plants year round. Because of the warm and humid conditions, it is also a favorable place for insects and diseases to thrive. Daily observation and monitoring for problems is required. A record is kept of actions taken to combat a particular issue for future reference. As the plants grow in the comfort of the greenhouses, watering, fertilizing, spraying for pests, pruning for size and shape, and additional propagation continue.

Growing plants for the spring sale and for the Gardens is only a portion of the winter operations here at Reynolda. The first frost is a threshold that, once crossed, requires the removal of lifeless plant material from the flower and vegetable gardens. These beds then become the objects of much thought as we begin designing for the next season. Some of the staff members routinely spread mulch, remove leaves, carry out small tree work, service general equipment, and perform trail maintenance. Shortly after the New Year, hundreds of perennial starter plants are ordered for us to transplant and grow. Seed catalogs are scrutinized for days, looking for favorites, classics, and what is new and exciting. Once the dozens of seed packs arrive, there are thousands of seeds to be sown. Sowing time is based on factors such as the last frost date and the desired size of the plant. Some seeds will be sown directly into the garden when the weather is favorable.

The staff of Reynolda Gardens is often asked if we have other jobs in the winter. We think this is quite amusing. In spite of how peaceful this time of year is, we know that the winter season is just slow enough for us to catch our breath before the chaos of spring. 🌱

## Sustaining Reynolda Gardens: The Good, the Bad, and the Uncertainty of Climate Change

by Amanda Lanier, RGWFU curator of education

Being around for a hundred years will certainly give some perspective on the fact that things change. Our gardens have been subject to these changes and can attest that what worked a century ago may not work now. Almost any experienced gardener has a story where they have experienced change in the garden, whether for good or not. In fact, despite controversial political differences, farmers, hunters, bird watchers, and gardeners all agree that things are changing. So what will climate change bring to the garden? Here are just a few changes the average gardener may want to know about.

For the avid gardener or plant hobbyist, climate change may seem to have a silver lining. As hardiness zones shift, plants typically grown in warmer climates are now surviving in traditionally cooler areas. Here in the Piedmont of North Carolina, gardeners are seeing successful overwintering of species, such as palms, that previously were not hardy in our area. Worldwide certain crops have longer seasons and could potentially provide greater yields. All this seems to be a nice benefit, but we know that balance will find its way in nature, and what may be good for some, may not be so good for others.

Phenology is the study of the life cycle of a plant or animal and how it interacts with the seasonal climate. The time of year when plants and animals begin important life tasks — such as when butterflies or birds start their annual migration or when plants bloom — is influenced mostly by temperature. Even small changes in temperature can throw off the timing of these important life cycle events. With an altering of these systems, a ripple effect occurs, and the availability of food, shelter, and other vital needs may not be met like they once were. Many of our garden favorites may be affected by this, especially the native ones. Species with long life cycles or slow dispersal of seeds are particularly vulnerable as conditions become more suitable for exotic species and less suitable for native species.

Early blooms are another problem that home gardeners will really begin to notice. A study at Longwood Gardens

has shown that flowers in the Philadelphia area are blooming up to one and a half days earlier per decade, compared to 150 years ago. A day and a half may not seem like much, but flowers that bloom earlier in the growing season have less chance of being pollinated by bees. From my previous article, we know that bees are already in trouble as is our food supply. Problems with pollination will only worsen these situations. Speaking of important garden visitors, the National Audubon Society recently reported that almost half of the bird species in the United States would be in danger within this century because of shifting and shrinking ranges. Increasing winter temperatures have caused a total of forty-eight North American species to move northward by more than 200 miles. On a somewhat lighter note, even our favorite winemaking grapes may be affected. Recent research has shown that grape biochemistry is affected by light and temperature, and higher temperatures may leave us drinking sweeter wine with higher alcohol content. Although tempting, I am sure that more potent alcohol is not a good reason to forget about climate change.

The uncertainty of climate change seems to be the most disturbing issue for gardeners. Annual temperature maximums and minimums have begun to change the schedule of when we do things in the garden. For the first time in history, we cannot count on previous years' data to plan our gardens. Uncertainty is also a factor in the occurrence of extreme weather events and their increase. Strong scientific evidence links climate change with increasing heat waves, intense precipitation, and drought. These effects can be cumulative. Extreme heat conditions, for example, are known to worsen drought effects. Last year NOAA's National Climatic Data Center saw the most extreme issues from drought in their twelve years of collecting data. In some areas, drought conditions exceeded those seen in the times of the Dust Bowl. In addition, many of us know that heavy rain events do little to help water our plants because of runoff, yet the frequency of these events and floods in unexpected places are on the rise.

So there you are, some of the good, yet mostly troubling and uncertain truth about climate change in the garden. What is a gardener to do? The answer is found in knowing we face a new day that is going to make us think very differently about the way we have been operating. There is much hope if we are able to embrace change ourselves. I look forward to exploring those topics in my next edition where I focus on extreme gardening for an extreme climate. 🌱

## The John Hope Franklin Orchid

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

California produced a successful cross and several flasks of viable plants.



Connie prevailed upon her good friend and orchid enthusiast Redge Hanes to accept the flasks when they were ready and continue growing the seedling orchids. Unfortunately, when the flasks arrived, they were broken, and the seedlings were scattered in the box. They were so small that Redge ground up orchid bark in his blender and painstakingly replanted them. Although many were lost, approximately fifty survived.

It was at this point that Connie called me, and the torch was passed to Reynolda Gardens and David Bare, the greenhouse manager. I think David was very nervous to assume responsibility for Connie's babies, but he is a very fine orchid grower and took on the task. In February 2013, the first orchids began to bloom.

This year Duke University is holding several events celebrating what would have been John Hope Franklin's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, and Connie will take the newly hybridized John Hope Franklin Orchids to Duke for the festivities. As with all hybrids, none will ever be the true JHF orchid. But as Redge Hanes says, "Surely John Hope Franklin is smiling at the thought of his orchid again seeing the light of day, and just as surely he has given an A+ to his most devoted student, Constance Gray." 🌸

## Pegging Roses

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

- 🌹 'Frau Karl Druschki' (1901) Hybrid Perpetual, six feet. Snow white blooms appear in summer and repeat strongly in early autumn. May be one of the best white roses in the garden.
- 🌹 'Gloire Lyonnaise' (1885) Hybrid Perpetual, four feet. Large, creamy white, fragrant, double blooms.
- 🌹 'Blush Hip' (1846) Alba, five to eight feet. Soft pink, very fragrant, double blooms. Many rosarians believe this is the best of the Alba classics.
- 🌹 'Alba Maxima' (pre 1500) Alba, six to eight feet. Creamy white. Feathery buds open to highly scented, double flowers. Particularly tough and disease resistant.
- 🌹 'Madame Isaac Pereire' (1881) Bourbon, six to seven feet. Huge, deep rose flowers. Repeat bloomer.
- 🌹 'Honorine de Brabant' (Introduction date unknown) Bourbon, five to seven feet. Large, loosely cupped, fragrant, pink blooms that are striped and spotted with darker shades of violet, crimson, and mauve.



PUBLISHED TWICE YEARLY BY REYNOLDA  
GARDENS OF WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

Communications about Gardens  
development should be addressed  
to Preston Stockton, manager.  
Correspondence concerning *The  
Gardener's Journal* should be  
addressed to Amanda Lanier, editor.

A calendar of events is published  
separately in February and September.

Website: [www.reynoldagardens.org](http://www.reynoldagardens.org)



*Printed on paper made of 50%  
sugar cane pulp and 50% recy-  
cled fiber, including 30% post-  
consumer fiber. No new trees  
used and elemental-chlorine free.*

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