

Spring  
2016

# The Reynolda Gardeners' Journal

## Beyond the Cedar Walk

by John Kiger, RGWFU assistant manager

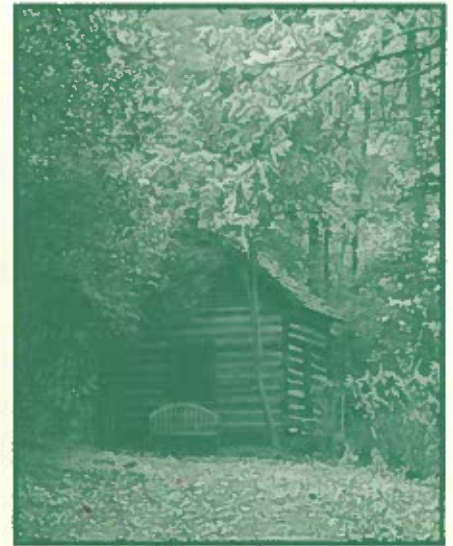
In 1899, Mary Katharine Smith stated to a college roommate, "When I marry, I shall go to Europe on my wedding trip and I shall bring home a wonderful work of art. And then I shall buy a great estate and I shall have a thousand cattle on a hill and flowers all around."

On February 27, 1905, Mary Katharine Smith and Richard Joshua Reynolds were married at her parents' home in the small town of Mount Airy, North Carolina. Soon after, Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds were aboard a train bound for New York where they would embark on the largest passenger ship at that time, the White Star Lines, RMS *Baltic*, for a four-month honeymoon in Europe. They returned on June 16, 1905 on the RMS *Celtic*, also owned by the White Star Line, and began their life at 666 West First Street in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

The first of Katharine's dream had become a reality. In 1906, her dream of acquiring a "great estate" began to take shape as she began purchasing tracts of farmland that would eventually become the estate of Reynolda. In fact, she purchased a total of 1067 acres. Nestled upon one of the many tracts of land she purchased stood a log cabin that now sits on Reynolda Gardens' property. The original location of the log cabin has never been determined. It is thought that landscape architect, Thomas Sears, intentionally placed the log cabin in its current location during the construction of Reynolda Gardens to terminate the vista of the Cedar Walk.

It is possible our cabin began its life as a curing facility for tobacco. Tobacco was once a main economic staple for farmers, which could not have been produced without the

THE CABIN,  
PHOTO CREDIT  
CLAUDIA SEN TAHAZ



existence of a tobacco barn. Tobacco barns for example once reached numbers of 500,000 across the United States. Today that number has dwindled to 50,000. Some of these barns have been saved and salvaged for use as storage buildings, garages, or housing, while some are beyond repair. If the Reynolda cabin were once a curing facility for tobacco then it would have been taller with a dirt floor. The Reynolda cabin has signs of what appears to be the remnants of a tier system, which is noticeable from the outside. Typically, most tobacco barns varied in width and were generally tall to accommodate the interior tier system where tobacco, tied to "tobacco sticks," could be hung to dry. In earlier days, wood stoves set up on the dirt floor inside the barn supplied heat that dried the leaves to perfection. There is a small area cut out in the logs on the front of the cabin that could have allowed for a flu system for a wood-fired stove.

My grandfather grew tobacco and the family would assist at harvesting time. I have vivid memories of my mother waking me in the early morning hours to go help "prime"

## Reflection of the Dogwood

by Michelle Hawks, RGWFU horticulturist

One of my best memories growing up in Fancy Gap, Virginia, was walking the fence line with my dad to check on our cattle. I remember strolling near the creek and asking him about the trees and ferns. We talked about the many trees on our farm, and he said that the dogwood was his favorite. When I asked him why, his response still stays with me, "It's my favorite because it means spring is here and that means new beginnings for the land and the family." The dogwood is a tree that many appreciate. Its historic significance and its simple beauty make it a great addition to any landscape.

Dogwoods have always been a part of the natural landscape at Reynolda. Katharine Reynolds and landscape architect Thomas Sears appreciated them, as shown by one of the original planting plans from February 23, 1916. The plan called for installing thirty flowering dogwoods, *Cornus florida*, around the front of Reynolda House. In addition, other plans called for planting sixty dogwoods in the woods along Reynolda Road, half of those with white flowers, *Cornus florida*, and the other half with red twigs, *Cornus siberica*. The view of these beauties 100 years ago must have been breathtaking.

The word dogwood comes from the Old English "dagwood" because the slender stems of the tree were used in making narrow wooden items such as daggers, arrows, and skewers. In 1614, the name was changed to Dogwood. The wood of the dogwood tree is very strong, dense, durable, and resists splitting, so any small item that requires hard wood can be made from this tree. Obviously, Thomas Jefferson appreciated its strength because he used the wood for all of his doorstops. The dogwood is still used in golf club heads, walking canes, and mallet heads.

During the Victorian era, dogwood flowers were often used to show affection. A young man would give the flowers to an unattached woman that he found attractive. If she felt the same way, she would keep the flowers. If not, she would return them to him.

The dogwood is a significant tree to Christians. Myth says that it was used to provide the cross for Jesus' crucifixion, although there is no historical verification of this. Supposedly, Christ marked the flowers of the dogwood so that they would be a reminder of the cross on which He died. In the anonymous poem titled *The Legend of the Dogwood*, you will find the following passages, "Never

again shall the dogwood grow, slender and twisted it shall always be, with cross shaped blossoms for all to see. The blossoms shall be in the form of a cross, two long petals and two short petals, and in the center of the outer edge of each petal shall have bloodstains marked brown. The middle of the flower is a crown of thorns and at the edge of each bract is a nail dent and the dent is stained with the color of Jesus blood." As beautiful as the poem is, the use of the dogwood for the cross is unlikely, given the tree's native range, which does not include the Holy Land.



The lovely flowering dogwood, *Cornus florida*, is deciduous. It is a very popular landscaping tree that is valued for its showy spring flowers as well as its red fall foliage. One of the most intriguing facts about dogwoods is the flower petals aren't really petals at all, but bracts. The purpose of the bract is to surround a cluster of tiny, yellow flowers. As

the flowers bloom, the bracts protect the cluster, then expand to attract pollinating insects. Once pollinated, the flowers produce small red berries. The berries are about half an inch long and are eaten by many animals. Many dogwood trees have white bracts, but some varieties, like *Cornus florida* var. *rubra*, have pink bracts, which can be single or double. When a dogwood is mature, it can reach twenty five feet tall with a spread of twenty five feet. These trees like no more than four hours of direct sun, and they thrive in zones 5-9.

If you are thinking about planting dogwoods, there are some important things to consider. These trees love good air circulation. They can grow in full sun but really do prefer the shade. Dogwoods need slightly acidic, well-drained soil that is rich in organic matter. Maintain two to four inches of mulch around your dogwood to help keep the soil moist and cool, but keep the mulch away from the trunk. Water your dogwood thoroughly and continue to do so during times of heat and drought. Once established, you won't need to water the tree regularly.

People often are concerned about their dogwoods dying or becoming diseased. One of the most common diseases of the dogwood is anthracnose. Anthracnose is a fungus, *Discula destructiva*, that was first reported in New York and Pennsylvania in the late 1970's. Since that time, it has slowly moved south along the Appalachian Mountains through Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia, reaching North Carolina in the late 1980's. Anthracnose is very destructive, and homeowners should take it seriously. Light brown spots on the leaves, especially the young ones, first identify the fungus. These spots then grow into large splotches that are brown to purple. The foliage will look distorted, wilted, and curled. Anthracnose eventually spreads to the twigs, branches, and trunk and can cause the limbs to die back or develop swollen or sunken areas. Prevention requires identifying the disease early on. If you are not sure, call your local agricultural extension office. If your dogwoods are diagnosed with anthracnose, there are fungicides available to help. There are also several new varieties that are bred to be more resistant to the fungus.

When I bought my current home six years ago, I noticed a couple of my neighbors had Kousa dogwoods, *Cornus kousa*. Unlike the flowering dogwood, the kousa gets about twenty feet tall and blooms later in the spring. The kousa has more blooms than the flowering dogwood, the branches are closer together, and the leaves are a bit smaller. To me, the most beautiful part of the tree is the bark. In late summer you will see a mosaic of irregular color patches due to the bark peeling or shedding, which is a normal process of growth. The leaves of the kousa also turn a dark red in the fall. The fruit is very eye catching; it is a large, bumpy, red fruit that looks like a cherry. You can eat the fruit, although I have never tried it. Some say it tastes like a pear or apricot and that it is best eaten raw. Evidently, cooking the fruit takes away the flavor.

So, what dogwoods are good for the typical homeowner? If you like to look out your window and see a parade of color, then the Firebird Dogwood, *Cornus florida* 'Rubra', is for you. In the spring, you will be treated to a show of pink and white blossoms, followed by a display of white, pink, and green variegated foliage. In the fall, the leaves turn plum purple and fluorescent pink.

Stellar Pink Dogwood, *Cornus* x 'Rutgan', (a hybrid cross of *C. florida* and *C. kousa*) is another good choice. The flower is large and a delicate pink color, much like cotton candy. In the fall, the foliage turns a garnet red that glows in the sunshine.

*Cornus florida* 'Princess' is a dogwood you will want to plant where you can view it from indoors. This showy dogwood has an early, heavy bloom of large, white flowers. 'Princess' usually grows fifteen to thirty feet tall and can be wider than tall.

Over the years, we have seen the dogwoods slowly die away and leave the landscape at Reynolda. In the fall of 2012, the Gardens staff started replacing dogwoods and adding maples and redbuds along Reynolda Road, from the front gate up to Coliseum Drive. The generosity of Forest, Westwood, and Little Greens Garden Clubs has allowed us to purchase these new trees. We have planted around forty trees so far, and our plan is to replace at least ten to fifteen trees each year. If you get a moment, take a walk around the Reynolda Estate and look for the new trees. I know you will appreciate them just as we do. 🌿

## A Southern Magnolia

by Amanda Lanier, RGWFU curator of education

There is something about the sweet fragrance of a magnolia that is hard to forget. When I was a child, my mother would leave the blossoms in a vase on the dining room table or even stick some in the family car. The flowers, only lasting a few days after picking, have an intoxicating aroma that reminds you to stop and smell them. The southern magnolia that grew so tall in my childhood front yard was always a mix of blessings and curses. My next-door neighbor broke his leg climbing that tree, but what a wonderful tree to climb. My dad spent the evening in it one Halloween, jumping out occasionally to spook the young goblins passing by. For years following that night, children would walk on the other side of the road, anticipating his leap from the giant tree. The shade it gave prevented much from growing underneath, but it gave us a haven in the heat of the summer, so we could play outside just a little longer. I cannot tell you how many of those large cones I picked up, a quarter for each five-gallon bucket, but there were many. I can tell you that I used to wish I could climb to the highest limbs in order to pick those enormous blossoms. They just seemed to go to waste since they were so far up that no one could smell them.

The southern magnolia, *Magnolia grandiflora*, which means "big flower," has always been a favorite of mine, and I am not alone. A symbol of southern heritage, this tree exudes grace and majesty and is loved by many inhabitants of the South. We use the leaves to adorn our stairways and mantels. The blossom is the state flower of both Louisiana and Mississippi; it is a true native. Many say the resemblance to a southern woman is in this magnolia, as it is strong, yet delicate. The term, "Steel Magnolia" refers to this association. A look into this tree's past and character tells the story of a tough, determined, and wise southern mother.

Magnolias are some of our most primitive plants. Fossil records indicate that magnolias were present 36 to 58 million years ago; suggesting dinosaurs could have snacked on their leaves and even enjoyed their shade. Botanists believe they are the oldest flowering plants, having survived continental drift, mountain formation, and ice ages. The Magnoliaceae family is comprised of

"WHEN I WAS YOUNG I LEARNED THAT, WHILE GORGEOUS, MAGNOLIAS ARE FRAGILE AND BRUISE EASILY—QUALITIES OFTEN ATTRIBUTED TO SOUTHERN WOMEN. BUT IF YOU LOOK UNDERNEATH, YOU REALIZE THEY POSSESS A TENSILE STRENGTH STRONGER THAN ANYTHING I COULD EVER MUSTER."

ROBERT HARLING,  
SCREENWRITER  
*STEEL MAGNOLIAS*

(BIG MAGNOLIAS CREDIT:  
CHILDE HASSAM, 1859-1935,  
COURTESY OF RHMAA)



12 genera and around 240 species, all of which are woody shrubs and trees. The magnolia genus has around 90 species that are native to the eastern United States, Central and South America, and Asia. In 1703, Charles Plumier, a botanical explorer, first used the term magnolia when he named a flowering tree, found on the island of Martinique, after Pierre Magnolia (1638-1715), a renowned botanist, physician, teacher, and former director of the botanical garden in Montpellier, France.

Generally, magnolias are primitive, woody, seed-bearing plants that can be deciduous or evergreen. They have adapted to a variety of soils and climates but are found mostly in the well-drained, slightly acidic, moist soils of mixed-deciduous/conifer forests or evergreen forests. Many of the deciduous varieties, including all of the Asian species, are precocious, meaning they bloom before the leaves emerge. The flowers are quite varied and can be white, yellow, pink, or purple. Magnolia flowers are diecious (containing both male and female parts) and have three or more sepals and six or more showy petals. Although simple in design, the flowers of magnolia are robust. The petals are thick and tough, and the seeds are well protected. This design accommodates their visitor traffic, comprised mostly of messy beetles. Beetles eat through the petals to get to the pollen and sometimes even defecate in the flower, making it clear that this flower is quite resilient. Actually, beetles are responsible for the pollination of magnolias, which makes sense, because beetles have been around for over 200 million

years. They evolved long before the more modern pollinators like honeybees and butterflies. Although many modern pollinators are attracted to the magnolia, the beetle is the one that pollinates the flower and does so while it is still in the bud stage, before the sweet scent reaches other pollinators' senses. The flower actually produces a fragrant, sugary secretion that is not a true nectar but is a protein-rich food source for bees and other pollinators. The fruit is also quite primitive looking. It is a cone-shaped structure with red, pink, or orange seeds that hang from thread-like strands. These fruits are a favorite of birds and provide a high-fat addition to their diet, which is especially important for birds that migrate.

The tough, leathery, evergreen leaves of the southern magnolia are not harmed by the fierceness of the southern climate. Through thunderstorms and snowstorms, this species thrives from Maryland, south to Florida, and west to Texas. The leaves, which are simple, smooth, and shiny on top and fuzzy and rust-colored on the bottom, can stay on the branches for up to two years. The southern magnolia, like many other magnolias, has adapted to a variety of different climates, soils, and sun exposures. In most states, it is considered a facultative plant, or one that can grow in both wetlands and non-wetlands. When given the space, it can be quite a large tree, growing fifty to ninety feet tall and twenty to forty feet wide. Some have grown as wide as they are tall, much like the ones in front of Reynolda House. The trunk is straight with light gray to brown scales that are close together. Flowering from late spring to fall, the southern magnolia produces impressive white blossoms that can measure from six to eight inches across and are highly fragrant.

This staple of the South has a variety of talents and is highly valued as a shade or screening tree. If you have ever been to Georgia, you will understand how important a shade tree can be. As such, the southern magnolia has the ability to provide significant energy savings and, additionally, increase carbon intake. Resistant to sulfur dioxide, a by-product of burning fossil fuels, it is popular as a screen in many urban and suburban landscapes. We know some of the most severe southern storms have been in the form of hurricanes. Southern magnolias are often used in the southeastern coastal plain region because of its reputation of resilience and has been the soundest survivor of many large storms.

If you are considering planting one of these southern charms, have patience. Although it is generally fast and easy to grow, establishing a root system can require up to four years. Begin by purchasing a containerized plant at a reputable garden center, since starting the tree from seed is just too troublesome for the average homeowner. You will have the most success with a two to four foot specimen planted in late winter or early spring. Once your magnolia is in the ground, it is important to fertilize and mulch (at least 1 inch from the main stem). Regular watering is crucial and should be continued for the next three to five years as roots are developing. Magnolias do not require pruning; however, their limbs may reach the ground if left untouched. Unfortunately, being patient also includes waiting on the blooms, which may take up to ten years after planting to develop. Lastly, one must remember that things are a little slower in the South and sometimes quite messy; the southern magnolia is no exception to this rule. In addition to the time it takes for the tree to mature and bloom, it can be one hot mess. Leaves drop 365 days a year, and cones litter the ground in late summer. The good news is both can be raked under the tree, since nothing else will grow there, and used as a mulch.

As I explored the southern magnolia, I came to understand its association with Southern culture and women in particular. This tree has its definite difficulties, as life does, but it is a beautiful example of grace under pressure, which just so happens to describe many great southern women I have had the privilege to know. 🌿

### Reynolda News

This past December, Amanda Lanier, our curator of education, received her Master of Science degree in Environmental Education from Montreat College.

Please join us in congratulating her on this outstanding achievement.

## Replacing the Cryptomeria in the lower Formal Gardens

The next time you visit you will notice that the line of Cryptomeria trees has been removed and replaced. Thomas Sears' 1917 plan for the Greenhouse Garden included 12 *Cryptomeria japonica* trees that run perpendicular to the greenhouse complex. In the late 1990's during the renovation of the Formal Gardens, the Gardens' staff took out the original trees that were in decline. They were replaced with trees that were grown



from cuttings taken from the original trees. The overall philosophy during the formal garden restoration was to retain historic plant material whenever possible and for as long as possible. For materials requiring replacement, propagation of historic plant materials was recommended.

Unfortunately, the replacement trees have struggled and declined over the past several years. The ones closest to the greenhouse developed leaf blight

and died. Tip blight or leaf spot is a fungal disease that causes the branches to die back. To date we had lost three of the trees and many of the others were showing evidence of decline.

Many *Cryptomeria* cultivars are more susceptible to leaf blight than some of the newer varieties. We chose *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Radicans' as a replacement which is a quick grower and is more resistant to the diseases that afflict many Japanese cedars. We hope that this shift to a newer variety will allow successful growth and increased vitality for these iconic trees. 🌿



## Low Maintenance Roses

In the early 1970's, Reynolda Gardens and the Winston-Salem Rose Society installed an All-American Rose Garden that has attracted hundreds of visitors each year. In 2012, we were informed that the All-American Selections had decided to discontinue their public garden program. At that point, the staff discussed how to best manage the modern rose garden for the future. Originally, this area was a part of the Fruit, Cut Flower and Nicer Vegetable Gardens. The staff is always looking for ways to make the Gardens more sustainable, so after discussions with the Winston-Salem Rose Society, the decision was made to transition the garden to rose varieties that are more resistant to disease and require less water. By incorporating these types of roses, we hope to be able to cut back chemical use by two thirds and watering by one half. We hope that displaying and testing these harder varieties will be a useful educational tool for our local gardeners.



Forrest Allred, Reynolda's Head Horticulturist, spent many hours researching possible varieties to grow. He spent time at Biltmore House in Asheville, NC, and the Edisto Rose Gardens in Orangeburg, SC, talking to horticulturists about roses that they were testing. He also consulted the lists compiled by the horticulturists at the Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden at the New York Botanical Gardens where they have been growing and testing disease resistant varieties for many years.

We would like to thank Evergreen Garden Club for sponsoring this project with a very generous grant. These funds have been used to purchase new rose plant varieties and to replace the deteriorating steel edging in the rose garden beds with new aluminum edging. The east side of the upper rose garden was installed last spring. We hope to complete the west side by early summer of 2016. 🌿

## Beyond the Cedar Walk

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tobacco on her father's farm. I only performed this function a few times in my life. Possibly because I didn't perform to my grandfather's expectations. "Prime" was a term used for simply pulling the mature leaves off and placing them into a sled, which in my time, was pulled by a tractor.

As re-construction began on the cabin, Reynolda field-stone, which is used throughout the estate, was utilized as a foundation. Oak logs were replaced and leveled atop the stone; the two by eight planks were nailed to lower, inside logs followed by the plywood sub-floor. The floor was finished with an oak tongue and groove flooring which remains today. A field stone chimney was constructed to supply heat for the cabin.

Many years later, Paul McGill of McGill Realty located in Winston Salem, became the acting superintendent of Reynolda Gardens and served in this role from 1972 until 1979. During a recent telephone conversation with Mr. McGill, I asked him about the condition of the cabin during his employment at Reynolda. He assured me that it was structurally sound with the exception of a sagging floor. The repairs during McGill's time were simple. Using jacks, the floor was lifted and leveled. Concrete blocks were placed strategically under beams for support structures to maintain stability. Soon after, Mr. McGill had the structure wired for electricity and began using it as an education office, hiring Laurel Graham as Reynolda Gardens' education director who was later replaced with Nancy Dillard.

The reality is that time takes its toll on everything and our cabin is no exception. The bottom logs on all sides of the building have rotted over time allowing the floor to sag exposing daylight from the outside. J. L. Bolt, supervisor of the Wake Forest University construction department, was asked to assess the cabin and he advised us on the proper repairs which they will perform this spring. The first step will be to stabilize the floor from underneath. Initially, removing the floor from the inside was considered, but Mr. Bolt desired to maintain its historical attributes and decided to go in another direction. The construction team will remove a large section of the field stone foundation on the west side to gain access to the limited crawl space. Hydraulic jacks will be used to lift the floor to its proper

location. Once in place, concrete footers will be poured in specific locations to provide a footing for the concrete blocks, which will permanently support the floor structure.

With all sides of the exterior of the cabin needing attention, the most difficult task will be working with the lowest logs on the west side of the structure. Three lower logs that span eighteen feet will have to be removed just below the window and replaced with new oak logs, purchased from Cardinal Millwork and Supply in Greensboro, North Carolina. Large timbers will be bolted to the side just above the three logs to be removed to ensure the wall structure remains in place. Additional timbers will be added to support the load-bearing wall.

The new logs will be prepared for installation by cutting them to the exact length needed. Dove tail joints will be cut in the ends of each log. A dove tail joint creates a locking system that ties together the existing logs, which also have dove tail joints, into place. With all logs in place, the construction crew will maneuver into the crawl space to re-nail the existing floor to the new logs. The final phase of work will be re-installing the foundation of Reynolda field stone. Once this process is complete, the Reynolda Gardens cabin should last another one hundred years or so.

Conducting research on any topic can take one down many different paths. In my opening of this article, I wrote of Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds embarking on their honeymoon trip to Europe on the R M S *Baltic* owned by the White Star Lines. Some of you may recognize the name being associated with the *Titanic*, which was also owned by White Star Lines. This piqued my interest and after digging deeper, I found that the Captain of the *Baltic* was Edward J. Smith, the same Captain who commanded the *Titanic* on its maiden voyage. I found this revelation to be extremely interesting. This discovery ties the Reynolda Estate to the tragic accident that was *Titanic*. It is pure speculation on my part but it is possible that R. J. and Katharine Reynolds possibly dined and conversed with Captain Smith.

On April 14, 1912, just hours before the *Titanic* struck the Iceberg, an ice warning was sent from the R M S *Baltic* to the *Titanic*. On April 15, 1912, Reynolda Gardens was under construction the same day the *Titanic* sank. One can only imagine the topic of conversation around the dinner table once the news of this disaster became known. 🌱

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