

# AMERICAN PEONY SOCIETY

INC. JULY 2, 1904

## Bulletin

**JUNE - 1950**

**Bulletin No. 117**

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W. F. CHRISTMAN, Editor  
Northbrook, Ill.

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Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Northbrook, Ill.,  
July 3, 1928, under Act of March 3, 1879.

Annual Subscription, \$3.00 Per Year, Included with Yearly Dues

*Published quarterly by the*  
**AMERICAN PEONY SOCIETY**  
NORTHBROOK, ILLINOIS

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Membership in the Society is open to both professional and amateur growers. Nomination is not necessary for those desiring admission, but a list of applicants for membership is presented to the Society at its annual meeting and the names are there voted upon.

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The annual dues are \$3.00 which includes the bulletins. *All checks covering membership dues should be made to The American Peony Society and sent to the Secretary with application for membership.* Dues in future are to run from January 1st to January 1st of the following year.

Back BULLETINS of the Society will be charged for at the rate of 25 cents per copy and 50 cents for the Symposium Number (No. 14). To non-members these prices are doubled.

No BULLETINS available prior to No. 13.



# AMERICAN Peony Society Bulletin

JUNE, 1950

## The Value of Organic Matter in Gardening

GUSTAV A. L. MEHLQUIST

*Research Horticulturist Missouri Botanical Garden*

Probably no component of garden soil has been so controversially discussed as the organic matter. There are some who claim that healthy plants can be grown in media entirely free from organic material, while others go so far as to maintain that plants not only perfect but completely immune to diseases and insects can be obtained if the right kind and amount of organic matter are used. Extravagant and controversial as such claims may be, it is interesting to note that both extremes contain some elements of truth. For instance, normal-looking plants have been grown in sand and other media from which all organic matter has been removed by chemical treatment, all the nutrients needed having been furnished by properly compounded chemicals. In practical gardening, however, such a method is out of the question. Those who go to the other extreme and maintain that the right amount of the right kind of organic matter will eliminate all danger from infectious diseases or insects are not only equally impractical, but, what is worse, their claims are not supported by facts. To be sure, plants grown with the correct amount and kind of organic matter often exhibit a greater resistance to diseases and insects than those grown with an insufficient amount, for the same reason that children who get all the milk, vitamins, and wholesome food that they need will, by and large, show greater resistance to many diseases than will their less-fortunate playmates who get neither sufficient food nor the right kind. It is not my purpose to discourage those who are organic-gardening enthusiasts but to point out that while a sufficient amount of organic matter is desirable for best results in the garden it is not a cure-all. Granted then that organic matter is needed, just what then is meant by that term and how is the material obtained.

Organic matter, in the language of the gardener and soil technician, means the residue from living things. For the sake of convenience, organic matter may be discussed under three categories: (1) original tissues, such as dead plants, freshly fallen leaves, garbage whenever such is used in composts, grass clippings, etc.; (2) partially decomposed materials such as animal manures, partly rotted leaves, compost, peat moss, and the like; and (3) humus. The term "humus" has been variously treated in horticultural literature. The definition suggested by Waksman seems the most concise and yet inclusive: "Humus is a complex aggregate of brown to dark colored amorphous substances, which have originated during the decomposition of plant and animal residues by microorganisms, under aerobic and anaerobic

conditions, usually in soils, composts, peat bogs and water basins." Chemically speaking, humus is largely composed of those parts of organic tissues that are most resistant to decay, the less-resistant tissues having been decomposed before the humus stage was reached. Humus, however, is not a fixed material but is in a dynamic condition as it is constantly formed from plant and animal residues and is continually undergoing further decomposition by microorganisms. Thus the organic fraction of the soil is really the life of the soil.

Organic matter has many important functions in every-day gardening. In the rough or partially decomposed state, organic matter is invaluable for mulching. Proper mulching probably is one of the most useful tricks that the present-day gardener can learn despite the multitude of new things that has become known in the last few years in the fields of plant nutrition and hormone treatments. A 6- to 12-inch layer of leaves, straw or other undecomposed organic materials is very useful in the winter to prevent frost injury to the surface roots of tender shrubs, bulbs and perennials. Partially decomposed materials such as leaf mold, compost, manure, peat moss, or ground corn cobs, applied 1-3 inches deep, are exceedingly valuable as summer mulches. This is especially true in the Middle West and Southwest where the rains during the growing season are often limited to the kind of showers that beat down with great force for a few minutes, carrying away much of the best top soil. The intense sun that usually follows literally bakes the exposed roots and forms such a crust on the surface that the next shower cannot penetrate the soil. However, if the soil is cultivated just deep enough to break the crust and a mulch immediately applied, the formation of a new crust is prevented, and water, whether from rain or sprinklers, is able to penetrate. Furthermore, a mulch conserves moisture by cutting down the evaporation from the soil, a very important feature in semi-arid areas. Many people still have the idea that merely breaking the hard crust of the soil will conserve moisture. Experimental evidence indicates just the opposite. To be sure, a hard crust retards water penetration but it also retards evaporation, and merely breaking it up without protecting the loosened surface soil from being washed away by the next heavy rain or beaten into another hard crust is poor economy. Any one who has observed the rivers in the Middle West literally loaded with top soil following a hard rain cannot help but wonder how long this can go on. To those who can read or talk, the dangers from atomic energy seem horrifying, and yet to most people, even those who live directly from working the soil, the yearly irreplaceable loss of soil and the resulting lowered productivity in the face of a continually growing population mean little or nothing. Somehow starvation, either in this generation or the next, does not seem a more pleasant prospect than death from an atomic bomb.

Perhaps the greatest value from organic matter lies in its chemical and physical properties when it is mixed with the soil; that is, when it is part of the complex mixture of materials collectively referred to as the soil.

Physically, organic matter makes for better structure of the soil. It "opens up" tight clay soils and at the same time "binds" sandy soils. In clay soils the addition of an adequate amount of well-rotted organic matter prevents packing. It therefore creates aeration and tends to prevent cracking and crust formation, thereby stabilizing the moisture-holding capacity of the soil. In light sandy soils, which usually dry out too quickly, the binding and water-holding quality of organic matter is equally valuable.

Chemically, the value of organic matter is perhaps even greater. It has the ability to absorb various chemicals so as to change the amount of in-

organic salts going into solution and to form compounds with certain elements, notably iron, which render them more readily available to plants. This quality manifests itself in so-called buffer action which may be defined as the ability to resist change: that is, when a dose of fertilizer is added to a soil low in organic matter most of this fertilizer becomes immediately available to the plant, which is all right provided only the right amount and kind of fertilizer are applied at one time and more is added as this is used up. However, since we do not know exactly what kind of fertilizer is required nor how much, an overdose may be directly injurious. On the other hand, a soil rich in organic matter absorbs much of the fertilizer which, after undergoing many changes, is slowly released through the process of decomposition to the plant roots in available form. Thus organic matter not only tends to prevent injury from overdoses of fertilizer but also to reduce the losses of soluble fertilizers from the soil through leaching by heavy rains, quite a factor in some soils.

Biologically, the organic matter serves as a source of energy for microorganisms which, under proper conditions, are responsible for converting many of the non-available chemicals and minerals into available plant nutrients. The microorganisms obtain the energy by decomposing the organic matter. During this process ammonia, carbon dioxide, and water are released as by-products. The carbon dioxide is released into the air from which the plants again absorb it through the process of photosynthesis. The ammonia is changed into nitrates, the form of nitrogen most readily available to the majority of plants. The water is utilized directly by both microorganisms and plants.

The question naturally arises what is the best kind of organic matter to use and how it is obtained. The answer to this question depends on many local conditions and can be answered here only in a general way. No matter where a gardener is located he usually has access to fallen leaves, grass clippings, and plant refuse of various types. As has already been pointed out, leaves and other coarse material can be used directly as winter mulches. With shrubs and larger perennials it is not necessary or even desirable to remove this material in the spring. It can be spaded in or just left to serve as a summer mulch. If this is not possible because additional plants are to be planted the material should be raked off and put on the compost pile. When undecomposed organic matter is mixed with the soil just before planting time, the plants often develop symptoms indicating lack of nitrogen. This is due to the fact that the microorganisms, in decomposing the organic matter, built up their own numbers very rapidly and in so doing take away some of the available nitrogen from the soil. A light application of a readily available nitrogenous fertilizer will give both the plants and the microorganisms enough nitrogen, and as the organic matter is decomposed the nitrogen removed by the microorganisms is returned, so the loss is only a temporary one.

For best results the organic matter that is to be mixed into the soil should be pretty well decomposed. To accomplish this it should be properly composted. As with most horticultural subjects, the methods recommended for composting vary with the author. This is not so disturbing as it may seem, for local conditions and materials often dictate variations in procedure. Any kind of organic refuse can be used in making a compost pile—leaves, weeds, grass clippings, garbage, etc. Straw or hay used for winter protection of roses and perennials, and even smaller evergreen branches and twigs can be used. A word of warning, though—unless the compost pile can be made large enough to develop sufficient heat to destroy diseases and insects, diseased and insect-infested plants should be burned rather than put into the compost

pile. The size of pile required to develop this heat (around 145-150 degree F.) varies with the material used, coarser materials requiring greater depth than finer materials. For average materials the pile should be not less than five or six feet wide and as high. The length of the pile will depend on the amount to be composted, but, of course, should not be less than the width. After decomposition the material will have settled to less than half that height. It should be borne in mind that since little or no heat is developed on the outside of the pile, the outside material should be spaded inside when it is turned over so as to heat it up sufficiently to pasteurize it. More rapid decomposition will take place if an inch or two of animal manure and garden loam is added for every foot of organic refuse. The addition of balanced commercial fertilizers, at the rate of three to five pounds per 100 cubic feet, will also greatly hasten the decomposition.

A comparatively level, shaded, out-of-the-way place is the best location for the compost pile. If a variety of materials is used, they should be mixed or laid in thin layers, on top of the other, to a depth of a foot, and then covered with manure and soil as mentioned above. Five or six successive layers make a suitable depth for most materials. If neither soil nor manure is available, a balanced commercial fertilizer may be applied at the rate of three to five pounds per 100 square feet of the individual one-foot layers. If heavy stalks such as those of corn, sunflowers or hollyhocks are used, they should be laid across the pile, preferably in the lower layers. In this manner they will facilitate proper aeration as the pile sinks and packs due to decomposition. The pile should be laid with the sides as straight as the material will permit and the top should be depressed to catch and hold the rain water. If the material is dry at the time of making the pile it should be watered, or if it dries out later it should be watered from time to time. After six to ten weeks the pile should be turned over with a fork and the outside material put on the inside, and in another six to ten weeks the compost is ready for use. If mainly oak or beech leaves are used for composting, agricultural limestone should be used at the rate of five pounds per 100 cubic feet in order to neutralize some of the acidity inherent in these leaves. Lime should not be added, however, if the compost is intended for acid-loving plants such as Azaleas and Rhododendrons. An acid compost will require longer to break down, often a year or more.

Anyone interested in soils and compost will find the following references interesting and helpful:

The Nature and Properties of Soils, by T. Lyttleton Lyon and Harry O. Buckman. The Macmillan Co. 1947.

Soils and Fertilizers, by Firman E. Bear. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1947.

Humus, by Selman A. Waksman. Williams & Wilkins Co. 1938.

Our Plundered Planet, by Fairfield Osborn. Little, Brown & Co. 1943.

An Agricultural Testament, by Sir Albert Howard. London. 1940.



## More About Tree Peony Propagation

Harold E. Wolfe, Belleville, ~~ILL.~~

It was pleasing, indeed, to receive your comments on Mr. Wister's article, and on the work I have been doing with tree peonies. It is just one more reason for me to keep on trying, and devote still further efforts in that field.

You are certainly correct in feeling that the growth of the two year old plant was unusual, but it is actual, as the stems bear out. Growth for the year

1948 is easily identifiable, as is that for 1949. It had two stems and several incipient buds when set out in 1947. The most important feature, however, is the number of fibrous roots, and the fact that they are well up on the individual stems, which make the plant easy of division.

I can attribute this fine growth to no "secret." If there is any secret it is in keeping the roots cool and moist. Sawdust just happens to be the best material I have found for that purpose. As for cultivation, they had none like Topsy, they just grew. As a matter of fact,—and I make this statement only after actual experience, realizing it is in contradiction to much I have read on tree peonies,—I find tree peonies quite easy of culture. But this culture is different from most of what I have read on how to grow them.

My work with these plants has been largely a matter of a fool walking where an angel should fear to tread. I first became acquainted with them through Mr. Josiah Whitnell. He had quite a few in his home here at Belleville. In 1942 when he moved to a new home, there was not sufficient room at the new place for all of his plants. Knowing that I at least loved plants, and had some room, he suggested that I lift the ones he had left at the old place, put them out at my place, and give him divisions of them should he ever change locations again and have room for them.

I lifted the plants in late December of 1942 and put them out, (some 30 of them) in my own back yard and in a near by vacant lot with very poor soil. They were, frankly, not planted so good, as my neighbor and I, (he assisted me), had to work hurriedly. I placed straw on the plants after the ground froze. Then, early in the Spring of 1943, a boy tossed a match into the straw and burned to the ground the stems of all but a few! I thought they were ruined, but to my extreme gratification, they all came out with fair looking, but short stems in 1943. In 1944 the ones that had been burned looked better than those which had been spared the flames.

Having been strongly attached to these plants and their flowers from the time I first saw them, I was, by this time, becoming more interested in them. I knew of their expensive nature and resolved at that time to do what I could to find out some way to make their propagation simpler. (Mr. Whitnell had told me how difficult it was, both by seed and grafting, and I had read and re-read Wister's article in the Manual).

When the National Convention of the A.P.S. was held here at Rockford, Mrs. Wolfe and I decided to attend, and see what we could pick up there on tree peonies. It was at that meeting that I joined the Society. But,—and I realize now it could not have been otherwise,—I came away sadly disappointed. No one there seemed interested in talking to me about them, and I collared every person I could. I made up my mind there that either little was actually known about these beautiful plants, or what was known was top secret. As we drove away from Rockford, I remarked to Mrs. Wolfe that I was going to find out about tree peonies if it took me all the rest of my life to do it.

The next year we visited Swarthmore, (Wister was in New York, where I later saw him for perhaps 30 minutes), Oberlin at Sinking Spring, Pa., and Saunders at Clinton, N.Y. I returned home as baffled as ever, feeling almost as though I was on a hopeless quest. Everyone I met was wonderful to me,—gentlemen all,—but I didn't find out much about the why and the wherefore of tree peony culture. Missed Gratwick on this trip and have never yet seen him.

Well, we returned home and I went through the bibliography in the Manual.—good old Manual.—and selected every item about tree peonies.



copies of all they had, and they had *plenty*! Read these carefully, felt I Sent this to the Library of Congress and had them make me photostatic knew a little more.

In the meantime I had been working with grafts and cuttings and seeds, but was having no luck. Grafts would throw foliage, only to shrivel up and die. Seeds, (purchased at 5c each) didn't come up, and I would find later their empty, rotted hulls. I began, too, to try rock mulches on the plants, which seemed to help somewhat. I then tried grass and leaf mulching, and found that this helped still more. Organic matter in the soil seemed to be a part of the answer with the plants, but that was not the answer to the seeds and grafts. I made grafts from August to November. They, with few exceptions, died.

Then, by accident, I learned how to secure excellent germination from seeds. The year was quite a busy one for me, and I did not have the seed bed prepared in time to put the seeds out when they were gathered in August, so I put them in a large pot, with clay soil, and buried them, while still "fresh," about 19 inches deep in a well drained spot. I mulched this heavily. All I expected to do was to keep them moist until I could plant them later. Later was on Armistice Day. When I lifted the pot, practically all the seeds had germinated, with rootlets varying from  $\frac{1}{4}$ " to 3". The seeds that had not germinated, were all soft, and probably had never been viable. (My present method is to place them, as soon as harvested, in rows about 3" deep, in good rich soil, then mulch at once with 6" of sawdust. This saves a handling, and root systems are not disturbed. Seeds from Japan cannot always be handled that way, due to lateness of arrival. I put them in pots as before, then put out the next year. Have received about 50,000 seeds from Japan in the past two years.

Grafts, as Wister mentions, I now make in October. It seems that when bud development is pretty well along, they "take" better. Also, as he mentions, I set them very deep. This gives the scion and stalk plenty of time to make union before the foliage is put forth. Also,—ground temperature is conducive of root formation. This seems to be the key.

*Lutea* hybrids grafted with no more difficulty than *Moutans*. The stock does not seem to be the critical factor at all. As a matter of fact, I have begun to conclude that the scion may actually not receive much strength from the stock,—that all we may need is the union with some sympathetic root stock.

Being interested primarily in culture propagation, I have paid little attention to varieties. From here on I shall pay them more heed. Their nomenclature is so confused, however, perhaps one is just as well off not to worry too much about them right now.

As for the saw dust,—I feel that is the answer. Cool roots mean vigorous plants; cool and moist, that is, and plants grown in this manner in full sun do better than those grown in shade or semi-shade. Soil, rich in humus, is essential. They are *not* insistent on either acid or alkaline soil so long as neither condition is pronounced.

My goal is to help make these beautiful plants available to more people. If what I have done has contributed to that, I am pleased. I have no plants for sale at present but will have within the next few years. In the meantime I am going into hybridization of both tree and *herbaceous* peonies.



## Peony Patricians

by GEORGE W. PEYTON

Past President, American Peony Society

Over forty years ago a high official of The American Peony Society stated that it was his opinion that the peony had been brought to the highest state of development of which it was capable. If he could have attended any one or more of the several fine peony shows held this year we wonder what his reaction would have been. In these shows there was on exhibition the greatest aggregation of fine peonies ever assembled in every class and type. Of the probable six hundred or more varieties shown, there were not twenty-five that were in existence when this official made his pronouncement. Within the next five years after it was made there were introduced such grand flowers as *Le Cygne* of matchless form, *Therese*, and *Kelway's Glorious* of unsurpassed general excellence, *Solange* and *Tourangelle* of exquisite coloring, *Phillippe Rivoire* still the criterion of excellence in form and fragrance for reds, and that greatest show flower of them all *Martha Bulloch*.

Down through the years since then, there has come a constant procession of new varieties which seem to grow even better with each new introduction. Here we shall only mention a few of those which now hold the top places in our estimation, but for how long no one can predict. Beginning with the white and blushes and continuing on down through the pink and reds these seem worthy to be classed among the best:

### Doubles

*Elsa Sass*, creamy white, charmingly veiled in pink; *Mattie Lafuze*, immense ivory pink, and *Victory*, glorious white faintly tinted pink, both debutantes which seem now to be destined to rank as high as any other we have; *Mary E. Nicholls*, immaculate white; *Moonglow*, shimmering moonlight; *Flower Girl*, blushing innocence; *Mrs. J. V. Edlund*, a show flower of perfect form; *Mary Auten*, with lavender tones; *Marilla Beauty* of charming informality; *Dr. J. H. Neeley* and *Dr. F. G. Brethour*, stalwart and handsome; *Mrs. Harry F. Little* and *Mrs. W. L. Gumm*, tall and graceful; *Florence Nicholls*, *Moonstone*, *Mandaleen*, three garden beauties of exceptionally sturdy growth and beauty of bloom; *Dorothy J.*, grand in flower and plant; *Judge Snook* pink toned and *W. L. Gumm* pure white, two rather dwarf top-notchers; *Mrs. Frank Beach*, buff centered and *Mrs. J. H. Neeley* with the flush of the new dawn; *Hansina Brand*, massive and showy; *George W. Peyton* and *R. A. Napier* exquisitely refined in tones of matchless coloring, with *Rapture* their equal in every way; and *Nick Shaylor* whose occasional accents of red do not prevent its being probably as fine a peony as we have today. Winding up the list of whites and blushes we cannot but mention that flower shown for the first time this year, *Ann Cousins*, which for depth of bloom and distinctiveness with its beautifully reflexed petalage has not been equalled by any we know. And here should be mentioned the equally new and excellent *S. F. Wood*, though of very different build and with delicate tints of pink.

Coming now to the pinks we have heading the list *Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt*, whose great rose shaped flowers of glorious pink and whose excellent performance in all sections won for it the Gold Medal of the American Peony Society this year: *Mrs. Livingston Farrand* in lighter and *Tondeleyo* and *L. W. Pollock* in darker shades are three whose purity of color has exceeded any others yet produced; *Dolorodell*, sturdy and rich and *Doris Cooper*, new and fine are two that we shall watch with much interest, both tall and strong; *Laura Kelsey* and *Westhill* have size and beauty well combined; *Minuet* as stately and graceful as the dance for which it is named; *Myrtle Gentry* maybe

the best of them all, and *Blanche King* so often the best flower in the show with its dark richness and marvellous form, with three toned *Rosanna Shrader* ending the list of pinks. On the border line between pink and red we have two tall and spectacular flowers, *Mabel L. Gore* and *Kansas*. In good reds for perfection of form and richness of coloring *King Midas* and *Ruth Elizabeth* stand at the top. For all-round excellence *Sir John Franklin*, *Mark Twain* and *Bonanza* seem to be headed for the top. Spectacular in the garden, loosely built and large in size, *W. E. Blanchett* and *Burma*, very dark, will satisfy; and still unmentioned are such grand flowers as *A. B. Franklin*, *Amberglow*, *Alesia*, *Gertrude Gibson*, *Harry F. Little*, *Joseph Christie*, *Nancy Nicholls*, *Nancy Nora*, *Louise Lossing*, *Odile*, *Thura Hires*, *To-Kalon*, *Annisquam*, *Judy Becker*, *Mrs. Bryce Fontaine*, *John L. Greshaw* and many others.

For daintiness and charm as well as garden appeal we must turn to those types of lighter build. In the list of true semi-doubles we have *Miss America* and *Mildred May* in spotless white, *Silvia Saunders* delicate pink, *John Howard Wigell* of darker hue. *Fireball* truly a flaming color, and divinely dark *Red Goddess* heading the list for grace and charm. Of somewhat heavier build but equal in beauty there are *Ernest F. Kelsey*, *White Rose* in white toned pink, *Lady Alexandra Duff* slightly pinker and *Garden Princess* light pink.

For sheer loveliness nothing has yet surpassed *Isani Gidui* with which we begin our list of Japanese type flowers. In this type *Gold Standard*, *Christine*, *Moon of Nippon* are pure white and *Shaylor's Sunburst*, *Sagamore*, *Sunmist*, *Toro-no-maki* and *Margaret Atwood* have over tones of pink. The light pink *Yellow King* with intensely yellow center, *Ama-no-sode*, *Tamate Boku*, (slow grower), *Largo*, *Rose Valley* and *Westerner* (maybe the best of all), make up a list of pinks that will give universal satisfaction. The best reds include the almost scarlet *Nippon Brilliant*, showy *Sword Dance*, floriferous *Hari-ai-nin*, dignified *Nippon Beauty*, *Mrs. Wilder Bancroft* and very dark *Charm*.

Earlier but equally valuable are the single type flowers of which *Pico*, *LeJour*, *Krinkle White* and *White Perfection* in whites; *Angelus*, *Josette*, *Sea Shell*, *Pink Dawn* and *Pride of Langport* in various shades of pink; and in reds *Arcturus*, *Imperial Red* (immense), *Flanders Fields* (very brilliant), *President Lincoln*, *Man o'War*, *Kickapoo*, are the best we have.

#### Herbaceous Hybrids

However fine and beautiful the albiflora peonies may be, we have to turn to the new strains of hybrid peonies for the really promising and startling developments of recent years. Pioneered by Prof. A. P. Saunders and Lyman D. Glasscock both of whom started from scratch about twenty five years ago, and now aided by a number of younger men, the results obtained show that the opportunities for advancement are truly unlimited. While so far the great majority of the varieties introduced are singles with only a few good doubles and fewer of the Japanese type, yet the promise for the future by using multiple parents through many generations is for peonies of every type and color of far more brilliance and vigor than any we now have. Already there are varieties in commerce of almost every color of the rainbow, in singles. It only remains to get them in the other types and that will surely come. Also the great majority are red or pink of various shades with only a few whites, one or two yellows and at least one lavender. To mention varieties is almost futile since they change greatly every year, yet it may be in order to name a few of each color. The best doubles to date seem to be *Rose Marie* and *Diona Parks* in red, *Salmon Beauty* and *Garden Sentinel* in brilliant pink. The semi-doubles which sometimes are almost Japanese in type are two very fine ones in very dark red, *Chocolate Soldier* and *Marta*. Many also that are singles as listed are really semi-double. The trues,

Japanese types are *Dainty Lass* and *Jewel*, pink and red respectively. In singles the best whites to date seem to be *Chalice* and *Requiem*. A very near green is *Green Ivory*, and a true yellow is *Claire de Lune*. *Nathalie*, *Julia Grant* and *Victoria Lincoln* are glowing pinks while *Golden Glow* (probably the most famous of all), *Flame*, *Defender*, *Challenger* are just for the brilliant reds of every hue. The only lavenders have as yet not been named. One was shown under number at New York and it was really a beauty. *Sable* is almost pure black.

### Tree Peonies

This class is just beginning to come into its own in this country. The best of the moutan or suffruticosa species are from Japan and are single or semi-double. Of these *Gessekai*, *Gabisan*, in white, *Tama-fuyo*, pink *Hanakisoi*, rose pink, *Hodei*, rose red, *Hatsu-hinode*, scarlet, *Impumon* and *Kinfukurin* in brilliant red, *Kuro-botan* dark red, and *Rimpo* purple are good examples of the best.

The *lutea*, *delavayi*, and moutan hybrids embrace the true yellows and some reds. Some of the better known are *Argosy*, *Silver Sails*, *Souvenir de Maxime Cornu*, *Chromatella*, *Alice Harding* in yellow, and *Satin Rouge*, *Black Douglas*, *Black Pirate* and *Corsair* in red.

All who can should try these new peonies. They will get pleasure untold.

GARDENERS' CHRONICLE—September, 1948



## Some Pests We Must Learn How to Combat

Many of the folks who glance at these lines are confronted with the problem of where to plant their peonies. They live in the city, in some out of the way place, in a spot where there is much shade or where the soil is far from the ideal soil we like to use for the vegetable garden. Peonies do not require much in the way of soil. Filled in areas where ashes and other refuse have been thrown may prove a very excellent spot for the growing of good peonies.

However, that soil usually carries with it much infection that may greatly affect the performance of the finest roots. Even the use of newly broken sods give a condition that is very hard to combat if used immediately for peony planting. It takes many months for fresh sod to be thoroughly rotted and humus produced from the rooty growths that supported the growth of grasses. These roots, though they may have had deep disking, cling tightly together and form a clump that harbors various insect infections that may be very harmful to new plantings. So in the selection of a peony planting spot it is wise to choose the very best spots possible and see that the soil is put in perfect condition before attempting to plant choice roots.

Not many of these same people glancing at this article have already made a planting of peonies, and they didn't do all the things suggested and they have problems. This article is written by one who has met those conditions in soil and in a measure has found a solution, but only after much damage had been done to some very fine plants.

New soil or untilled soil that may be brought in for the new planting may, and probably does, contain one or more of several pests that will cause you no amount of trouble if you are not ready to meet the situation. New soils taken from the woods or top soils taken from areas of nice top loams looks good, but is filled with fibril roots and much decayed matter that is the home of the pest, so be careful.

One of the first pests we shall attempt to discuss is the little, almost invisible worm that burrows holes in the pulpy roots of the plants. They tunnel out little runways that set up a toxic condition in the root which causes it to further rot and decay and soon the plant fails to produce very much of a leafy growth, which means that there is not an abundant root growth taking place. The little organism causing the trouble is the *nematode*. Iris growers fear this little fellow. Ordinarily the *nematode* do not bother peonies, but, where they are suspected the roots should be bared and a search made for their work. If found present, treat the roots around and below the crown with a good dusting of Carbola, an insecticide put out by Carbola Chemical Company, Natural Bridge, New York. Having been bothered with larvae in cabbage roots I tried this dusting in a little patch and it worked. The idea returned when I found one of my peony roots thus affected.

In a fall planting of peonies in new soil, or soil of doubtful cleanliness, watch for the activity of cutworms. They are always bad in early spring in any soil but where soil has been imported to the garden they are much worse. The bran and Paris green preparation is still good but there is on the market a product that is super. Catch the infection of cutworms just as soon as they start work and dust the soil around the plant heavily with Dura-Dust, an insecticide put out by Acme White Lead & Color Works of Detroit, Michigan. It goes to work right away and Mr. Cutworm ceases his activity immediately, and that is what is desired with peonies. Those tender shoots are cut off and it wrecks the top growth of your young peony and of course without an adequate top growth there cannot be the desired root growth you like in your young roots.

Our peony experts tell us that the peony is a great host to thrips which greatly injure the gladiolus. This year a dusting of Endo-Pest was given the peonies and has been used on the glads. We dare not say that there are no thrips present but the effect of the dusting is excellent and thrips have been well under control. Again referring to Paris green spray we will sight an incident of this spring's experience. One tube of Endo-Pest was at hand to dust four rows of potatoes for potato beetles or bugs. Two rows were completed and the tube was empty, so a bucket of Paris green was mixed up and the other two rows were sprayed with the solution. Three hours later a heavy rain fell. About six day later the patch was visited and the rows inspected. No bugs were found on the two rows dusted with Endo-Pest but several were found on the two rows dusted with Paris green. This shows how superior the killing effect of the Endo-Pest is over the old method. Endo-Pest is a Swift & Company product of Hammond, Indiana.

To those of us who stick by our old methods we must realize that our fellow grower is going to walk off with honors, for he is going to use these new and better insecticides. Without a doubt there are many other products on the market that will do just as well or better than the three mentioned, but the experience with these three seemed to be worth bringing to the attention of every peony grower. Members of Garden Clubs will probably be well versed on these new materials, but for the person who has not access to a membership in such a club many valuable helps may be received from these few lines.

(*Essay contest entry*)

R. F. Koby, Superior, Wis.

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# WHAT'S COOKIN' IN REGION NUMBER TWO?

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**Out of the Doldrums**

NEAL R. van LOON, *Newton, N.J.*

Into my country congregation a few years back walked a black-eyed Spanish lad. As he told me afterward, he was hitch-hiking his way North and his mother had taught him always to find his way into a church service when Sunday arrived, no matter where he might happen to be.

With all the intensity at my command, I had been speaking on the subject, "The Three Deadliest Sins". As I saw it these three were: selfishness, laziness, forgetfulness.

After the service the boy clasped my hand and thanked me for the sermon.

A couple of years after that, imagine how surprised and how pleased I was to have a penny picture post card from him, postmarked with the stamp of a country away down below the equator. The card had these few words scrawled upon it, "Thank you, thank you. I never forgit talk on sins. It hit me hard between the eye; selfish, lazy, forgetful, Manuel."

Well, of course, the sermon had hit me hard too, and it does now. "The husbandman must be the first partaker of his fruit."

The hardest part is the one about laziness, especially the dark and ugly kind that affects the mind.

I am persuaded that it would not hurt if we all gave this business a think or two. Does it bear down upon us that we have not done our share of the thinking, planning and writing which are the life blood of our A.P.S. or any other society?

Have we been so selfish as to give no co-operative push on our own leaf of the revolving door that would swing everybody into an ever expanding and more beautiful peony world?

Have we soon forgotten the enormous task carried out by another generation, begun already a half century ago?

Some noble and unselfish brethren took the field, and bearing the burden and heat of the day, and with the midnight oil still finding them leaning over desk or table, with nomenclature tangles, manuals, bulletins, histories, breeding experiments besides plans for great shows here and there, all over the map. They bore the torch high and steady for you and for me.

How grand it would be, if, here and now, from this day forward, every last son and daughter of us would get into the flow and rhythm of this thing and carry out conscientiously what might prove to be a small part, but what would surely be a very real part of this challenging task.

We dare not further, either through inertia or through indirection, fight the stars!

Contemplate with me a moment upon the words of Gertrude Stein: "A rose is a rose is a rose". She really had something, you bet, but we have something too and it is bigger and better. Oh yes we have! A peony is a peony plus a nice rose and then another rose, nicer than any rose could be, is a peony! She will be better tomorrow. Really, we do believe this, because we do not believe it, and we have been almost always wrong! It is no sin to be a sinner but it is a sin to remain one. It is unforgivable to be determined so to remain.

#### **The Society**

We are one thousand, scant. We are the spectacle of a Society sponsoring the cause of the queen, the mistress, the boss, the paragon of all garden flowers, and we can scarcely raise enough steam poundage to hover close to that thousand mark.

With travail of soul, a few workers gain a couple hundred members through a drive and here we are still hovering around that same thousand mark. The absolute minimum to which we should have attained, years ago already, is five thousand. Even at that we would have been desperately slow and conservative when you consider the brilliance of our peony star.

The Rose Society has won upwards of ten thousand members and is now hitting for twelve! Egad! All ye Greek Gods and little fishes! Lookit! Don't I hope to be born an Ayrshire cow or a tapioca pudding if our faces don't turn crimson with chagrin?

In a recent chrysanthemum and orchid show in New York City, I was told the place was crowded with people from all over the land and at a per nose price of one buck. We august ones of the peony persuasion put on a National Exhibition with an admission price of "for free" and our show room floors and walls groan with the terrific total burden of maybe one to two thousand over a period of two days!

Out of the doldrums indeed. Something is wrong and I know it is no fault of our queen.

With preachments done away, let us make it our firm purpose to snatch up on our standard from the dust. Let us bear it and our Regional pennants proudly aloft where all can be seen. We just cannot afford the questionable luxury of a weak faith, and a craven assent to let the thing go on as it is going.

If we are satisfied with a membership so small, concepts so inadequate, and horizons so desperately close, we will only engender trite, unchallenging, and deteriorating programs. The static position soon become the intenable one. Woe to him who forever remains on the defensive.

Now I pipe down until next quarter when I hope you will take, with me, a serious squint at our bulletins and our shows.

\* \* \*

## To the Peony Rose

MARGARET LOSEY

God made the Rose beyond compare,  
To be the Queen of Flowers,  
Yet even a Queen her Court must share.  
To add beauty to her Bowers.

The Rose so fair, and perfumed sweet,  
Grew vain, in bud and blossom,  
And with other beauty would compete,  
Thinking none could be so handsome.

A gracious presence to the Court drew nigh,  
With strength and grace endowed,  
Both form and bearing pleased the eye,  
And regal head unbowed.

With shapely stem, and head held high,  
Bouffant skirts of green so shiny,  
She unfolds pink petals to the sky,  
Lo, a Princess Royal, the Peony;

This Spirit Rose, gorgeous and sweet,  
Bowed her lovely head to the Queen,  
Her petals of glory she shed at her feet,  
A beauteous shower, as had ne'er been seen.

The Rose so haughty, would not retreat,  
And looked on this beauty with scorn,  
But the penance for pride was just and mete,  
"On the stately stem, grew the Thorn".

'Tis said. Peony roots once used by Paeon,  
Greek physician to the Gods.



Brought health to wounded body and mind,  
To Pluto, riven by swords.

Reward for goodness is over sure,  
Some-time some-where, mid friends or foes,  
The Spirit descends on the heart that's pure,  
For a sign, God has given the "PEONY ROSE".



### Don't Let the Big Ones Get Away

There is an old saying in the chemical research business that important discoveries are very often poured down the drain because they appear to have no value. To a measure, this also applies to the developing of new varieties of Peonies. How often does one patiently wait year after year to see a large bud held by a grand stalk on a new seedling that just fails to open to it's fullest possibility? After repeated disappointments the plant or plants are chucked into the garbage can as worthless. But are they worthless? Many of these so-called failures, when transferred to more suitable conditions, will consistently produce prize winning flowers year after year in a new environment. Wouldn't it have been better to send divisions of these roots to other localities for further trials before invoking the maximum penalty? An exchange of seedling roots of questionable merit between friendly growers might save for posterity a plant that will grow superb flowers when grown in an ideal habitat and under more favorable conditions. In questioning a number of growers it is found that this is not generally done. Why, no one seems to answer. One might suppose that the conscientious grower does not want to have his name attached to a variety of questionable merit. This, in general, is certainly a good stand to take, but on the other hand in doing so he may rob peonydom of a rich heritage and a rich award himself.

Nearly every peony lover's garden, if he or she has an extensive planting, contains a few disappointening varieties that were purchased because of their records in major peony shows. In many instances these were purchased at a sacrifice because real garden enthusiasts will stop at nothing short of the best. When these questionable roots were planted the heart beat increased and the blood pressure mounted in anticipation of obtaining great exhibition blooms. What a let down it is when season after season brought disappointment after disappointment! Then in comparing notes with his fellow gardeners it was found that these plants are absolutely sure fire bloomers when grown in a specific geographic location whereas in his area they are rank failures. And here is what elevated the hopes and dreams of the purchaser of these roots.

Our peony catalogs and bulletins gave considerable space employing sublimed superlatives to publicize consistent prize winners in our annual shows. Coupled with the records that these flowers made one cannot blame any gardener from leaving this terrestrial sphere to dream with seraphs and forget the caution brought out in the old proverb "Cavet emptor."

There is something wrong with our peony business when growers deliberately sell divisions to an enthusiast knowing fully well that the purchaser will never consistently get even ordinary size or quality blooms when transplanted in the new geographic area. This sort of a shell game tactic hurts the peony business. Industry today could not continue to remain as vital as it is if they pursued similar tactics and thought only of how much they could total up on the cash register and forget how or who got "gypped".

Don't let the big ones get away—let's develop flowers that will produce prize winning blooms under specific conditions, but specify clearly in catalogs the provisions under which they are to be grown: It is quite refreshing to note that a few growers have already taken the initiative to do this and in the long run will obtain the respect of peony lovers and at the same time increase their prestige.

Again, DON'T LET THE BIG ONES GET AWAY!

F. P. TIKALSKY  
LaGrange Park, Illinois



### **A Brief on Peony Growing in Southern California**

G. H. MURRAY, *109 Harding Court, Monrovia, California*

It is generally believed that the Peony cannot be grown successfully in Southern California. Nevertheless there are regions in this part of the state, where peonies do grow and thrive. At elevations of 4,000 to 5,000 feet above sea level, there are several plantings growing successfully.

One of the largest plantings, that of Chris. Colombo Brevitor, of Acton, California consists of more than three acres, grown for cut flowers only. Another good size planting is that of Mr. William H. Kempton up in the mountains out of Saugus. About 75 miles farther south, and a few miles northeast of Beaumont, at the Mile High Ranch, owned by Mr. D. E. Mauerhan is one of the best plantings in the state. Here some of the good varieties grown include *Solange*, *Philippe Rivorie*, *Claire Dubois*, *Baroness Schroeder*, *Mary Brand* and others. Mr. Mauerhan is planting a few of the very early varieties this fall as an experiment, hoping to have a peony that will flower regularly by Mothers Day. High up in San Diego County, not far from the ocean, near Julian, is another substantial planting, that of Mr. Barnes; here *Sarah Bernhardt*, *Francis Willard* and *Claire Dubois* are featured and are growing fine. There are several smaller plantings in the Big Bear and Arrowhead Lake regions that I have not seen.

Nearly all of the plantings have been made in very recent years but are past the experimental stage, and all who are growing them in appreciable quantities are enjoying a very profitable income from their investment and effort. The cut flowers sell on the market at seven to eight dollars the dozen, and the growers receive \$20.00 to \$30.00 a hundred.

With the vast and ever increasing number of eastern and midwestern people, who know and love the peony, coming to make their homes in Southern California, and as the native Californians acquire a wider acquaintance with this flower, there will be an ever increasing demand for the peony cut flowers, in excess of production for many years to come. Enterprising peony growers should take notice.

Peonies require no special care to grow here. The requirements are good soil; an elevation high enough to be in the frost belt where the ground freezes a few weeks during winter and ample water supply. Water not only for moisture requirements, but to keep the ground cool. The most successful growers applies a light irrigation almost continuously during the summer months.

Plant growth of all I have seen is normal; and the production of cut flowers is about 80% of the yield in old established peony regions. Increase is somewhat slower. The largest demand here is for pink varieties—probably 70% of the total. Mid-season to late varieties—all that have been

grown here to any extent so far, begin to flower usually around the 10th of May and are through blooming (except the very late varieties) by Memorial Day.

The writer for many years, grew the largest plantings of peonies in the state of Montana, embracing all the modern varieties. He also produced many seedlings, some of which are now being grown in different parts of the country under trial.

\* \* \*

### Suggested Basis for Rating

Adopt your own estimate of point values in ( )

<i>Features</i>	<i>Your Points Estimate</i>	<i>Appraised on</i>
Color	10 ( )	Clarity, brightness, attractiveness, purity, richness, etc.
Form	15 ( )	Uniformity, artisticness, true to type, unvarying.
Distinctiveness	15 ( )	Combining color and form with other qualities to cause it to be outstanding; individualistic.
Size	5 ( )	Consistently normal in size for the particular type.
Stem	15 ( )	Ability to hold flowers erect, giving dignity to both plant and flower.
Substance	15 ( )	The qualities that enable a flower to retain its form, color and freshness over a longer period than the average.
*Odor	5 ( )	A quality of questionable value, as an odor pleasing to some is offensive to others; viz. onions, tar smoke, cabbage, golden rod, marigold, tube roses.
Plant and Foliage	20 ( )	Pattern, sturdiness, and the ability to hold its shape under all conditions, combined with texture, freshness, and richness of foliage.
100%		

\* Note:—Dahlias have no odor. A rose without odor is still beautiful. The aster lacks odor.

Ratings should be by types: Singles, Japanese, Semi-doubles, Doubles and Decorative. A single should rate in comparative value to other singles and not as compared with doubles and other types.

Do not think that the forms of any type, such as bomb, cone, semi-rose or rose should be considered.

Submitted by Roy G. Gayle, Rockford, Illinois

The above suggested basis is with the thought of the symposium which should be taken this year. Mr. Gayle goes on further to state,—“To get the new symposium on a solid footing I think it would be a good idea to get the opinion of about 30 good growers and find out just how they interpret values, or just what constitutes good and bad qualities. From the consensus of opinion, an outline of points can be drawn as in the dahlia plan. Just to rate on bias is too indefinite. I sat down and hurriedly drafted an outline which would be swell to amend and send to the “thirty”, as to show in general, what is desired. Then they can reconstruct it to conform to their ideas of a basis of appraisement of the separate qualities that, when consolidated, constitute a peony. Point values are likely to vary in the opinion of the “thirty”, but a symposium can be made up from the varied opinions and a good form presented to the members upon which to establish their ratings.

Furthermore, I do not think that a rating should be accepted unless the member has grown it for a minimum of three years, or has lived in close proximity to a grower and carefully observed its qualities and possible weak points.

To be a symposium of great value, members should list all the varieties they grow and use the "guide" in rating them. Many members have but 5 to 25 varieties so are not qualified to give an authoritative opinion. They form opinions from reading the bulletins and a possible annual visit to some show. Rate what they have.

It is quite certain that a new symposium would create greater interest among the members than any other feature, and I hope it happens soon for I find my interest dying a slow death and I am sure this would be the needed remedy.

Roy G. Gayle  
Rockford, Illinois

✻                  ✻                  ✻

### Dubuque's Peony Trail

Let's take a ride for an hour and enjoy Dubuque's fifteen-mile Peony Trail. One hundred thousand blooms will nod to us as we move along. All shades from deepest red to purist whites. The air filled with delicious fragrance.

Here we are at Washington Park at the beginning of the Trail headed south near the first Trail marker. There are four large beds in Washington Park with 300 clumps now in their fourth year. Turn right on Sixth Street to Bluff and then down Bluff to Second. As you pass Fourth notice the beautiful planting of peonies and perennials.

At Second Street in front of the Cathedral there is a mass planting of 269 beautiful white and light pink varieties. You may wish to stroll around these beds or drive around them.

Continue on Bluff Street to Dodge and up Dodge to Rush. Turn left on Rush to Villa and left to Cleveland Park. Here on the hillside there is a mass planting of 461 clumps. The setting is delightful for in addition to the peonies a magnificent view of the Mississippi and its great valley lies before you.

The Trail continues on Cleveland to Bryant, right on Bryant to Curtis, left on Curtis to South Hill, and up to Grandview. Turn left on Grandview and travel along past bed after bed of glorious blooms to Plymouth Street, which you circle, admiring the masses of *Marie Lemoine*, *Louis Van Houtte*, *Avalanche*, and *Sarah Bernhardt*.

Returning to Grandview you drive south to circle at the end, returning to 1700, the Walk entrance to Grandview Park. Along this entrance to the Park are 481 clumps. A breath-taking, gorgeous mass of flowers.

Continuing our drive to Southern, down which we go to the drive entrance of Grandview Park. Follow the drive through the park and return to Grandview. There are more than 4,000 clumps of peonies on Grandview Avenue. Some of the highest rated peonies, such as *Marie Crousse*, *Edulis Superba*, *Le Cygne*, *President Roosevelt*, *Mikado*, *Richard Carvel*, *Mme. de Verneville*, and others are to be seen.

The Trail follows Grandview to Fremont: out Fremont and return to Grandview. Turn left on Grandview and left on Delhi past the University, where 259 clumps are planted on its campus.

Turn left on Asbury and past the Senior High School and Clarke College on Seminary to Madison Park with its four special beds.

The Trail doubles back to Madison Street, and down to Jackson Park where another mass of 300 clumps are placed.

From Jackson Park the Trail runs to Jackson Street and turns left to Lincoln Avenue. On Lincoln to Windsor, and out Windsor and return on Burden to Windsor, to Lincoln. Follow Lincoln Avenue to Shiras Avenue. Along Shiras to the Eagle Point Park entrance are several huge beds of *Benjamin Franklin*, *Festiva Maxima*, and other beautiful varieties and shades.

More than 1000 clumps of peonies border the entrance to Eagle Point. A riot of color in woodland setting! A fitting spot for the Trail's end.

This development of this beautiful Peony Trail was suggested by Mrs. E. B. Lyons to the Civic Garden Club in July, 1938. Through her sponsorship the project was later endorsed by the Dubuque Park Board. The first year more than 5000 peony plants were set under the active and capable supervision of Mr. Wendell Rettenberg, Park Superintendent. Each year the Trail has grown until in this past year there will be approximately 17,000 clumps on the boulevards in the Parks and along the Trail.

Dubuque's Peony Trail has reached such proportions as to take its place with Mobile's azaleas, Charleston, South Carolina's magnolias, and the tulips of Holland and Pella.

If you have not time to travel the entire Trail, see Grandview Avenue, Cleveland, and Eagle Point Parks.

E. B. LYONS, Chairman  
*Dubuque Peony Trail*



## Chlorosis

*By Charles Drage*

*Horticulturist for the Colorado A & M College Extension Service*

When plants turn yellow the sick condition is called chlorosis. The reasons are many and many may be obscure. Not enough of certain elements and too many of others may cause it to occur. Over-irrigation, poor drainage, lack of soil aeration, insects and diseases may cause chlorosis.

Chlorosis is much worse following bad winters and cool, damp springs and is showing up now in many areas. Several causes may combine to make a correct diagnosis impossible.

Of the various types of chlorosis the one most common in Colorado is the one where iron is lacking. The trouble is associated with high alkalinity and the plants are unable to use the iron in the soil.

Results secured by special treatment are erratic and temporary. The best chlorosis control consists of prevention: planting varieties adapted to the area and keeping them healthy.

Several methods of control are recommended for trial. Spraying with a 1-2 per cent solution of ferrous iron sulfate may cause the plants to green up. One pound of ferrous iron sulfate dissolved in 10 gallons of water makes a 2 per cent solution. Applying 1 pound of ferrous iron sulfate to 10 square feet of soil and watering it in has given results with shallow-rooted plants.

## A Report from Kansas

MRS. JOHN A. THARP, *Winfield, Kansas*

In reply to your letter of March 6th, will say that I am extremely glad to hear that the Peony show will be held so close to our home and it's an opportunity I didn't expect, as the shows have always been so far away, such as Canada, Minnesota and New York, and if nothing prevents I will surely be there, and if the peonies behave normally, will try to exhibit some.

I am enclosing my dues for the 1950 bulletins. I enjoy them to the limit and read every word in them.

After receiving your letter I hunted up the article on exhibiting peonies, which was in the March 1948 edition and studied it thoroughly. It was a very thorough and helpful article.

At present, (March 28th, 1950) my late peonies are just peeping through the ground. However, the early ones peeped out St. Patrick's Day.

I meant to report on the behavior of my peonies last year but never did get at it.

My *Flander's Field* and *Fuyajo* were swell, as usual. So beautiful, so many wanted a "slip". No catalog has ever described *L'Etincelante*. It was a poem of a plant. Outstretched arms wouldn't reach half way around it. It was covered with large pink, yellow centered single flowers. (Editor's note: This is often entered in the light red class as well as dark pink. I consider it a light red.) One visitor made the eight mile trip from town after he had seen it in the morning, to bring his wife and five red-headed, freckled faced sons. He marched proudly over to it with his brood following him and said, "Here's what I wanted you to see". So much for the singles.

I have *Primevere*, *Isani Gidui* and *Le Jour* in white which I hope to see bloom this year. *Kelway's Queen* is my early pink double that always looks so lovely with *Snowqualmie* iris behind it. *Therese* was tops after at least 25 flowers had been picked. My granddaughter and niece counted 54 pods, (not seeds).

*Karl Rosenfield*, *Felix Crousse*, *Thor* and an unnamed brilliant red with a row of stamens half way to the top, grand double reds *Philippe Rivoire* was in a niche all by itself, for it looked like a bunch of hugh, red (black) dahlias, and folks did rave over it. In fact, after it was brought into the house it was mistaken for dahlias several times. *Mons. Martin Cahuzac* was rich and grand.

Whites included *Le Cygne*, *Kelway's Glorious*, *Couronne d'Or*, *Festiva Maxima*, of course, and others that were extra fine.

*Marie Crousee*, always has to be lifted up but is beautiful just the same. *Myrtle Gentry*, and *Sarah Bernhardt*, cannot be beat for their perfection. *Solange* gave me the thrill of my life when it opened perfectly, and as the catalogs say, three or four blossoms trying to open from one bud.

This year I will have 35 or 40 new ones to bloom for me, I hope, and next year I expect to have a much better report.



## Peonies in Georgia

G. S. SCOTT, *Calhoun, Georgia*

While not being a peony grower of long standing, in my short experience I have had a chance to observe their growth in the extreme North West and the extreme South-East.

They say that peonies do not do well in the South. Neither does about 75½ of fruits and vegetables.

I have in my planting about 175 varieties of the better sorts and am located in a river valley in a hilly country. The soil is dark chocolate clay, and the peonies surely like their location, if their growth and blooming indicates their feelings.

This year, 1948, all plants which budded, opened, with one exception, —*La France*. The last to open was *Peter Barr*, a red single, followed closely by hybrids *Salmon Beauty*, *Jacquiminot*, *Red Monarch*, *Ballerina*, *Topeka* and others.

It seems to be understood by peony men that Japs and singles do well in the South. My experience has been otherwise, the Japs, having scanty bloom. With the singles it is different, some are extra fine while others are ragged and short lived. Some with a good reputation, I am ashamed of. They are either just in the act of opening or shedding leaves.

The two most outstanding were *Imperial Red* and *Pink Dawn*, possible for the reason that Mr. Sass made me a present of them when they were scarce. I slip it a B-1 tablet once, in a while. *Imperial Red*, with its rich red, stands up a long time and visitors take notice of it.

*Sea Shell* is always good. Of the semi-double, *Silvia Saunders* blooms well but is short lived.

Starting with the whites, *Harry F. Little* and *Alice Harding* were the two most outstanding.

Mr. Auten's *White Beauty* blooms well here. Most of my better whites have not bloomed, plants being too young.

In flesh, *Peach Blow*, *Mary Auten* and *Judge Snook* were good, but Mr. Snook's *Helen Hughes*, *Edith Snook* and *Sdlg. 204* were leaders both in growth and bloom. They grew rank like native weeds.

In pink, strange to say, two old timers commanded the most attention, namely *Mme. Emile Debatene* and *Souv. de Louis Bigot*. Among the best were *Salmon Beauty*, *Mrs. Livingston Farrand*, *Queen of Hamburg*, *Loren Franklin*, *Ernest Flint* and *Mrs. F. D. Roosevelt*. While I left *Mrs. F. D. Roosevelt* to the last, it was the strongest grower and heaviest bloomer. *Mrs. Livingston Farrand* and *Queen of Hamburg* stand up well here and their waist line is fine.

In the reds,—they are funny here in their behavior. A few like it real well and others do not like it at all. They want to cash in from the time you plant them and if they do grow they are fine stemmed and puny,—they just seem to be looking for a chance to die.

Among those that like it here are *Mr. L. van Leeuwen*, *Chic*, *Shawnee Chief*, *Priam*, *Topeka*, and *Splendor*. *Shawnee Chief* and *Chic* lead in growth and bloom. My neighbor tells me *Big Ben* does well. Will have to try it.

Will end this article with some why's from my garden notes.

Why did *President Wilson*, *Miss Eckhart* and some others bloom the same time as singles and hybrids?

Why do my peonies grow and bloom better up in hills like Irish potatoes, crowns being two inches above ground level, and if one inch deep, they are nice little plants with no blooms?

Why does stock of *Alice Harding* from one source do poorly while from another are my best bloomers?

In my short experience, it would seem that location, sturdiness of stock and depth of planting are very important in successful peony growing.



## A Report from California

I find the bulletins very interesting and informative, particularly for a novice. My last bulletin received in 1947 was the June issue, No. 105. Was it a late summer or fall issue printed? I so miss receiving them. Even though I just have a small plot of peonies it's a big help to find out how others overcome handicaps.

Here, in sections of California, soil conditions seem to be an important factor and barely covering the buds is recommended by most nurserymen who handle a few varieties in the fall. They also recommend a rich loam soil, something I do not have. I have a heavy clay soil that bakes like concrete during the dry summer months, unless kept moist. I am struggling along to loosen it up. So many things seem taboo as they tend to develop root disease.

I have seen some very beautiful blooms from local gardens, but inquiring of possession of the blooms, they were in the garden when the home was purchased during the year, or given by some friend and they could give no information as to the growing of them.

This past year I have noticed a marked increase in number in the florists windows. Unless they have been shipped from out of the state, the local commercial growers have the secret, but very cagey in giving out.

We have a Spring garden show that is really *something*, attended by over 15,000 people over a five day period, which, this year (1948) will probably be April 27th or 28th through May 2nd. It is supposed to be the only one of its kind in the country and flowers and shrubs from all over the world are represented.

Each year, a theme is worked out, and nurserymen and local garden clubs carry on the work. Also growers of various trees, shrubs and flowers participate. For the first time, I noticed in the 1947 show two nurseries had an exhibit of peonies. They had been planted in gallon cans in the fall and then the cans set in the soil among the shrubs or flowers to conform with whatever landscape idea the exhibit was representing. Peonies bloom from the first ten days in April through May. It was surprising what few people knew what the blooms were until a little sign was put there.

Attached to the main building show is the outdoor garden show sponsored by the garden clubs. A cut flower unit and the commercial unit where garden supplies of every description, and also plants, bulbs, etc. are sold. If the Peony Society deemed it worth while to send, or get a successful local peony representative, to have a peony division in a large glass jar to demonstrate the planting and culture of peonies, and a bunch of cut flowers to interest people, it might go a long way to stimulate the interest in peonies in the state, or at least in this locality. People around here are quite garden minded as the Spring Garden Show would indicate. Exhibiting space is usually all signed up for in the fall.

Why not take a run out here and see for yourself what the West can really do? You won't regret seeing our show.

While on the subject of peonies, in corresponding with you at this time last year, you inquired if there were many tree peonies in this locality. They are about like the herbaceous,—some here and there and culture sort of vague. The nurseries have some two or three specimens during blooming season and few have a name attached. The only place that features them is a Japanese Nursery South of Hayward, California operated by Toicho Domoto. In Spring he has several hundred gallon cans of peonies in bloom

from \$7.50 to as high as \$20.00. No named varieties. It seems he raises them from seed. They range from singles, semi-doubles and doubles. In color from very pink to deep purple. Mr. Toicho Domoto is considered the camellia king in this vicinity. He specializes in them, raises hundreds at a time, also rhododendrons, azalias, magnolias and all odd and exotic planis. He raises the herbaceous peony for the commercial cut flower market. I believe he has five acres of them. The culture information on tree peonies, so far as the Domoto Nursery gives out, is to plant in any good soil in a sunny place and feed with bone meal two or three times per year.

In the March issue of the 1947 bulletin, the article written by Mr. Reno Rosefield interested me very much. Withholding water during the dry summer months of July and August wouldn't work in my clay soil that bakes like concrete. Most articles I have read say not to let peonies dry out. On our vacation trip to British Columbia this summer I stopped off at his place to see peonies growing in the field and to compare them with mine. He has a very interesting place in a very pretty setting. Has quite a collection of rare colors and types in heathers, azaleas and rhododendrons and several other acid loving plants. He was in the midst of building his new home but very graciously took time out to show me around. Being anxious to be on our way too, didn't take time to look around too long. Enough though that if my peonies ever look like the ones I saw there I would feel that I had really arrived.

I hope I haven't bored you to death with this lengthy letter. You were so courteous to me a year ago and your letter so interesting, I thought you might be interested in what we do out here and the bulletin is always eager for material.

Editor's Note: The above taken from correspondence from a Western contributor, and name withheld at writer's request.



### What Do You Think?

Can you, or anyone else on the staff of the bulletin, tell me what causes a particular variety of peony to change its character?

About six years ago I put in about two hundred *Festiva Maxima* plants, all of which did exceptionally well and were true to type, (large white blossoms with red marking in the center of flower) for several years. Last year, about 60% turned out to have a very cream colored blossom, with a single, or nearly single, row of petals around an ugly, cone shaped center.

Could the juxtaposition of *Mons. Jules Elie* and *Baroness Schroeder* have anything to do with this change?—reversion or whatever it is?

Thank you for whatever information you can give me.

Yours truly,

Mrs. Robert J. Beede,  
Prospect Street  
Rehobeth. Mass.

Editor's note:

We wrote Mrs. Beede in reply to this letter stating that the close proximity of *Mons. Jules Elie* and *Baroness Schroeder* should not have anything to do with the change in type of *Festiva Maxima*. We also advised her that we would put her question up to our members to get their reaction on the matter. Will you write me about this, giving your theory on the subject that can be published in the Bulletin?

—

# Secretary's Notes

The month of June is with us again and with it the rose and the peony vie for high honors in the floral kingdom. Many other beautiful flowers such as the iris form a rainbow of beautiful colors that delight the flower enthusiast as well as those just starting in the work of growing beautiful flowers. The lilac, in early June, may still be found in fine condition in this particular section.

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This is the first year since I have been secretary of the American Peony Society that we have held our annual peony show in May, in fact I do not recall a single instance when the Annual Exhibition of peonies was held so early in the year. This was due, of course, to the fact that we have never had an exhibition of peonies so far South. Sarcoxie, Mo., was our meeting place this year, as you doubtless are well aware, and from the general response we are sure to make another trip to the southern section of the peony growing belt at some future time. That peonies can be well grown in the mid-southern section is a proven fact, and this was most delightfully proven by the fine flowers on display at this exhibition. Those who had the privilege of attending this peony exhibition were well awarded for the trouble and expense incurred in making the trip to Sarcoxie, Mo., and having the delightful experience of southern hospitality. The preliminary set up of this show left nothing to be desired, and those in charge are to be congratulated on the meticulous manner in which all details were looked after. The usual flurry, excitement and confusion at setting up time was practically absent. It is physically impossible to stage a show without some of these elements creeping in, particularly with those making their first attempt to display their flowers.

A full detailed report of the show will follow in the next issue of the bulletin as well as that of the Rockford, Ill., and other regional shows.

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The first auction of peony roots donated to the Society by its loyal members and supporters was held at Sarcoxie, Mo., and netted the Society nearly \$200.00. Over \$1,000.00 in most desirable peonies was donated for this cause and later sales will be made. Some of the finest peonies in cultivation were offered and the highest bidder carried off the coveted peony root he or she bid for.

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We have received many favorable letters about the article of Mr. Wister in the last bulletin and in this issue will be found further information on the same subject that we think will be of interest to our readers.

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On July 11th of this year Mrs. Christman and I will celebrate our Golden Wedding. Fifty happy years have gone swiftly by and it is hard to realize that so many years have passed in so short a time. We hope to present a likeness of ourselves in a forthcoming issue of the bulletin so you will know who makes up the bulletins, sends you bills for dues, replies to your many inquiries and many other little chores that goes to make up the work of this office.

At the recent annual meeting of the Society it was voted to raise the dues of members to \$5.00 per year to take care of running expenses. This will include a family membership of man and wife, either being permitted to cast a vote at our meetings, but no single family will be entitled to more than one vote on any question up for vote. It will also include dues for a company, or place of business. This will be effective from January 1st, 1951 and we are hopeful that this will bring in considerable additional revenue that will be put into the bulletin cost, enabling us to print larger and better issues, as well as to take care of other financial obligations that are necessary in the conduct of the Society's affairs. We trust every member will approve of this increase.

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Due to late freezing weather in various sections of the country, particularly in the southern section, there was a considerable loss of bloom that usually floods the market in the Chicago area. As a result, there has been a brisk demand for cut flowers which have brought favorable prices so far. The season in this territory is about a week later than usual and the quantity of bloom somewhat under normal. Quality is up to normal, however, and many fine blooms are expected at the Rockford, Ill., Fifth Regional Peony Show to be held on June 17th and 18th. There should also be some fine bloom shown at the New York show of District Number 2.

We will welcome reports of the performance of your peonies this season and will get them into the next issue of bulletin.

If you are experiencing any trouble in the raising of peonies, we may be able to help you if you will let your troubles be known. It is the purpose and intent of the Society to be of assistance to any of our members and this is one of your privileges of membership.

Write us about your success as well as failures with peonies.

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We want to take this opportunity to thank all members who have sent in remittances covering dues but we regret to state that there are some who are still overlooking this obligation. We want to keep on mailing you the bulletins as issued but cannot do so to those in arrears. We are counting on your continued cooperation and support. Don't let us down.

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We will have a full report of the Sarcoxie, Mo., show in the next issue of bulletin. I just want to say that the southern hospitality that we enjoyed will not soon be forgotten. Mr. Allen J. Wild and family tendered Mrs. Chrisiman and I the privilege of staying at their home and we are very grateful to them for all they did for us. Mr. and Mrs. Dale Wild were equally generous in their hospitality and tempted us most convincingly to stay over for a fish fry consisting of those wonderful Ozark trout and they nearly won us over. Had it not been for the burden of correspondence and duties awaiting my return, we surely would have accepted their most kind invitation. We certainly hope to have the privilege of going to Sarcoxie, again in the future for a peony show. The peonies in the southland have passed and we are just in the height of our season June 14th. Before me as I write are some gorgeous peonies that are a sight to behold and the two acres and more back of our home is ablaze with beauty.

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I am writing these last few lines of my notes before the bulletin goes to the printer. The Rockford, Ill., show of the Fifth District of the A.P.S. was a fine success and a splendid lot of peonies were shown. Mr. Peyton has the notes of a detailed report which will follow in the next issue of the bulletin.

Several of our members in the midwest have had the opportunity of seeing the variety *Doris Cooper* shown by Mr. Walter Lindgren of Minneapolis, Minn. It was awarded the Gold Medal of the Society last year. It is a lovely light pink that has great merit.

Last week Mr. Allen J. Wild of Sarcoxie, Mo., purchased the entire stock from the originator Dr. H. C. Cooper and a few will be offered this fall. See advertisement in this issue. It has not been available to the public prior to this fall season and the few to be obtained will soon be taken up.

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Have no detailed report of the New York show other than it was very good. Understand that Prof. A. P. Saunders of Clinton, N.Y. had a magnificent display of his hybrids and tree peonies. We expect to have a detailed report of this show in the next issue of bulletin which will contain several show reports.

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A phone call yesterday brought the sad news of the passing of Mrs. W. W. Cook of Clinton, Iowa, wife of our former Treasurer and faithful member these many years. Burial was made in Clinton, Ia., June 19th. Mr. Cook has our sincere sympathy, in which I know I am joined by every member of the Society who had the pleasure of knowing him personally.

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Cold storage facilities enables us to keep our beloved peonies in bloom for a long time after the regular season has passed. This proves a great thrill that we did not enjoy several years ago.

*H. F. Christman*

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### Medals Awarded by the American Peony Society 1949

Gold Medal	Awarded Dr. H. C. Cooper, for the variety <i>Doris Cooper</i> , Milwaukee, Wis., 6-18-49.
Gold Medal	Awarded M. C. Karrels, Milwaukee, Wis., 1st prize, Class No. 1-A, Milwaukee, Wis., 6-18-49.
Silver Medal	Awarded R. W. Goddard, Rochester, Minn., 1st prize, Class No. 1-B, Milwaukee, Wis., 6-18-49
Silver Medal	Awarded L. W. Lindgren, St. Paul, Minn., best entry five doubles, Class 100-B, Minneapolis, Minn., 6-18-49
Bronze Medal	Awarded R. H. Schmitz, Whitefish Bay, Wis., 1st prize, Class No. 1-C, Milwaukee, Wis., 6-18-49
Bronze Medal	Awarded Neal R. van Loon, Newton, N.J., for best Jap. type peony, " <i>Moon of Nippon</i> ," Milwaukee, Wis., 6-18-49
Bronze Medal	R. W. Goddard, Rochester, Minn. Best single " <i>Krinkled White</i> ", Milwaukee, Wis., 6-18-49
Bronze Medal	Awarded M. C. Karrels for best herbaceous hybrid, " <i>Red Charm</i> ", Milwaukee, Wis., 6-18-49
Bronze--B. H. Farr Memorial Medal	Awarded A. L. Volz. Best double in show " <i>A. B. Franklin</i> ". Milwaukee, Wis., 6-18-49

**Honorable Mention A.P.S. 1949**

E. H. Lins, Cologne, Minnesota for seedling R-5-95 rose pink Jap. Variety has been named *Minnekada* at Minneapolis, Minn., 6-21-49

Cottage Gardens, Lansing, Mich. Seedling No. 6, full double red. Milwaukee, Wis., 6-18-49

Cottage Gardens, Lansing, Mich. Seedling No. 66, white double, faint pink center. Milwaukee, Wis., 6-18-49

Cottage Gardens, Lansing, Mich. Seedling No. 93, white double, overlaid pink. Milwaukee, Wis., 6-18-49

Cottage Gardens, Lansing, Mich. Seedling No. 96, white double, slightly tinted pink. Milwaukee, Wis., 6-18-49

A. L. Volz, Milwaukee, Wis., Van Steen Sdlg. No. 12, white double, shaded pink. Milwaukee, Wis., 6-18-49

C. E. Winchell, Oskaloosa, Iowa. Seedling 33 B-4. White double, yellow collar. Milwaukee, Wis., 6-18-49

**A Communication From Washington**

Mr. W. F. Christman,  
Northbrook, Ill.

Dear Mr. Christman:--

Enclosed you will find my check for this years dues to the Bulletin.

We are just thawing out of one of the worst blizzards that I have ever seen in this country, so have had some time to go over the old Bulletins which is an interesting experience as I always find something that did not sink in the first time I read them. I found that there were practically no articles ever sent in from this extreme N. W. section of the U.S. so wondered if the readers would be interested in hearing how we grow peonies out here in this Puget Sound country where we can grow more types of plants than anywhere else in the world except England. Our climate is more like the English climate than any other but we do have drier summers than they do.

We have rather a unique location, just across Lake Washington from Seattle high up on top of a hill about 800 ft. above the Lake with a grand view in every direction with mountains on all four sides. On clear days our view seems to be endless for we can see so far. We see Seattle from end to end across the Lake with Renton at the South end. Our land (50 acres) is quite hilly and the main garden is on a knoll at the top of the hill with the ground sloping gently in all directions, giving several levels to the ground. Our soil is what is known to the miners as a "blowup." Quite rocky with a shale rock high in phosphorus that disintegrates and completely breaks down when turned up to the surface. Sort of air slacks. Although very poor in appearance it produces the finest root systems on all kinds of plants that I have ever seen. We have never purchased plants that have such heavy feeder roots and we have practically no trouble with insects. Naturally we have perfect drainage in both soil and air. Our main problem is getting enough water on the well drained soil, for we can go out and work the soil immediately after any kind of rain.

I often have great sympathy for many of the members when I read so many times of the frost damage to their peony buds, for that is something we never have. We are entirely out of the frost area, while down nearer

the Lake it is very bad. We do have some freezing weather in Dec. and Jan. usually not lower than 15 or 20 above. That is rather extreme.

I have always loved Peonies but have never had the right situation for them, for our garden in Seattle was too shady and too full of every thing else. My husband retired about 10 years ago and we came out to our "acreage" to develop a hobby garden. Bearded Iris was my hobby for years, later adding the Japaness type. We have very large plantings of both, probably the largest in the West. In my work with the Garden Clubs I naturally became interested in many types of plants and they eventually became collections. We have 170 varieties of Lilacs, over 100 Rhododendrons, 25 varieties of Ornamental Crabapples. Day lilies, every kind of iris that will grow in this climate (which is most of them) and last but not least our gorgeous peonies. Nearly 400 varieties and a want list as long as your arm. I have always grown a few unnamed varieties but knew I shouldn't plant many when the location was so foreign to their needs.

We have about three acres in our garden and promise ourselves that we will not clear up any more ground as the two of us do most of the work, with a high school boy helping some week ends and part of the summer. We have found our old snow shovel brought out here 30 years ago from St. Paul is invaluable for weeding. We use it like a shuffle hoe and it sure puts a fine mulch on top in nothing flat. In one days time one person can do more work than ten men with a regular hoe.

My husband being of rather an inventive nature has made me some of the best stakes for peony supports and I am suprised that some of you old peony growers haven't spoken of them. He takes quite heavy wire and bends a loop in the top to thread a string through. The wire is cut about 40 inches and so far we have found it quite enough to give support. You can use as many of these stakes as necessary according to the size of the plant. From a distance they have an entirely natural look and never do look like they were tied up in a bundle as most supports do. For small plants two stakes is sufficient, for larger ones six or more. If green string is used, you will be delighted with the effect. For a very weak stemmed variety one support for each blossom is not noticeable and you don't have to worry about your beloved blooms being down in the dirt. We have very little rain during the peony season so we try to give them a thorough soaking before the blooms open as we must water overhead in so large a garden. In emergencies we have a "gang" sprinkler. Many heads on one long hose that may be placed on the ground directly under the plants so the water is not thrown up on the blooms.

This past spring one of our largest Dept. Stores in Seattle wanted us to put on flower shows every two or three weeks during the summer. These were staged in the china and glassware section to promote publicity for the Dept. It is a huge undertaking to stage a show for eight hours per day during the entire week, but it was worth it to hear the comment from hundreds of visitors from all parts of the United States. Very few had seen the Japanese type and they were a sensation. The main question was "why don't my peonies bloom like that." Having been connected with the State and District so long in the garden club work I try to find an answer. This question was so commonly asked that the first thing I did was to ask them where they obtained their plants, 99 out of 100 said a friend took a spade and dug out a piece from her plant that didn't bloom either. We lost many orders from this one practice for they were afraid to try again. I believe the peony is quite exacting as to how it is divided. Many plants will grow and bloom no matter how they are treated. Rarely did I have complaints



where they purchased a good plant from a reliable dealer. The trouble is that many seed houses don't know a peony from a dandelion and think any old discarded roots will do well and they sell them to the poor public. One wholesale nurseryman told me that when he purchased the nursery he now operates, there were many old peonies on the place but he didn't know anything about peonies so he dug them all in the spring and cut them up into small pieces. I hate to admit that a N.W. nurseryman took these out and "peddled" them as he said to all the stores for 10c per root. The customer is partly to blame for they want a bargain and always want a guarantee that they will bloom the first year. Many customers have refused to buy when I tell them the plants must be established two or three years for good blooms, some have said Mr. So & So guarantees them to all bloom the first year. We have about 80% bloom the first year but I would just about as leave they didn't for so few are typical. Even the color isn't as it should be.

We have planted at least 1000 plants in nearly 400 varieties and so far have discarded only four that I thought were not in good health, and strangely they all came from the same dealer that is no longer in business. We make very thorough preparation of the soil before planting, for any plant is just about as good as the hole it is planted in. We use only raw bone meal in the hole then the years after that we use what is called "farm fertilizer that one of the firms locally puts out especially for farmers in this district. It is 5-10-10 as most soil here is greatly lacking in phosphorus and potash. We have had outstanding success with our peonies and the only 2 varieties that are complete failures so far are *Hansina Brand* and *Mrs. A. M. Brand*. I am still going to give them another year for 1948 had several days of heavy rain just as these late ones were in bud. then bright sunny days followed. The buds outer layers were hard as leather. This past season 1949 was so dry that we started our sprinkling system in March and kept it up until late in Sept. The driest season in history. The late buds partially opened but not entirely. Our cool climate should be good for late bloomers so I want to try them and see if we get a normal season this year.

I notice in many descriptions of colors the writer tries to keep away from "orchid" pinks, etc. As so many peonies have those lovely "sweet pea" shades of pink I think it would be better to play up those distinctive shades.

Two years ago I had an overflow of *Lychnis Viscaria Fl. Pl.* that had to be set out some where and there just wasn't another place to put it except at the edge of the peony bed along the path. Any of you that know this flower, I would commonly call it magenta pink, a very vivid intense color. I was afraid of what it might do to my delicate pink peonies but low and behold it brought out those lovely orchid tints to perfection and made a hit with every one. They all wanted the peonies that were along that path. The varieties were mostly Mr. Auten's *Gay Paree*, *Patty Flower Girl*, *Auten's Pride*, etc. By using blue flowers near some of these lovely delicate shades they are simply out of this world. Siberian Iris is a superb subject near all shades of pink peonies. I do not mix other plants in my plantings of peonies, but used as a background or border many lovely effects may be made.

Our Editor probably will throw out most of this article but that is always the Editor's privilege, so here goes for some various comments as they appear in my note book rather than in alphabetic form. *Westerner* was by far the lead in the pink Japs. It gave many lovely blossoms on a two year plant. I like *Departing Sun* in both the single and Jap. form, (one single one acquired by mistake). *Mrs. Wilder Bancroft* with her "frosted" center was admired by every one. It is one of my favorites and is very liberal with showy dark red blooms. *HANS P. SASS* a lovely crinkled creamy white but stems very weak. The first year I thought something was

wrong as the foliage was so yellow. I still don't admire the foliage. *Katherine Havemeyer* was magnificent on a three year plant with that lovely "sweet pea" pink that I like so well. I think *Lady Kate* deserves more praise if it blooms other places like it does here. I like its "mum" like form. *Arcturus* and *President Lincoln* were superb. The first year I thought it useless to have both but the second year they are quite distinctive. Both a must. Many of Mr. Franklin's such as *Better Times*, *Lavender Pink*, *Gypsy Queen* and *Franklin's Pride* were very fine on three year plants. A profusion of fine blooms, on all of them. So far, I am not impressed with *Evening Star* but perhaps when the plant is older it will be better. Just so so now. *Mrs. Livingston Farrand* is a gorgeous color and fine blooms here, 12 huge blooms the second year, but for some reason I don't go back to it like I do *Myrtle Gentry*. She just does something to me. I think if I could have only one pink it would be *Myrtle Gentry*. I find most garden visitors like the deeper shades better. *Dorothy J.* is a heavenly shade and also good producer of many large blooms. *John L. Crenshaw* a very fine red. I like the form of the center in whorls. *Ella Lewis* was very fine in a delicate sea shell pink. I was much impressed with the abundance of small red blooms on *Red Bird*. A fine dwarf floriferous plant, of great garden value. *Vina Mae* and *Spring Beauty* are both lovely, fluffy, shaggy flowers admired by every one. *George W. Peyton* was as fine as could be found, with that alluring buff in the coloring. *Mrs. F. D. Roosevelt* and *Minuet* were both outstanding. *Sea Shell* was the favorite pink single with *Puritan Maid* and *Dancing Nymph* a close second in near white. I do not disbud some of these singles and they are very ornamental for the garden. *Elsa Sass* was a rich Jersey cream by my note book but I could not detect any pink. Might be wrong name. I have several of the early Hybrids that are just starting to bloom, one year plants. *John Harvard*, *Salmon Beauty* both gave good bloom the first year. For early bloom I am very fond of *Off. Rosea pl.* It blooms over such a long period and has such interesting heavy red stems that are attractive long after the flowers are gone. *Marie Crousse* and *Souv. de L. Bigot* are two of my best pinks, far better than *Walter Faxon*. *Alice Harding*, *Raoul Dessert*, *Le Cygne*, *Lady A. Duff* and *Solange* all do well here. No garden is complete without some of the good old timers.

*Victory C. Thierry* is like a gorgeous sea shell. I can hardly leave it. *Jubilee* leaves me cold. Blooms well but too flat to suit my taste for beautiful peonies. *Mabel L. Franklin*, *Judge Berry*, and *Lillian Gumm* were all superb. The singles and Japs were all favorites and all seem to do well. *Flamingo* I think leads as it bloomed so early. It might be classed as a semi double but not enough petals for me to take it out of the singles. *Le Jour* was just loaded with those beautiful goblets. *Mrs. Edward Harding* and old *Festiva* both were loaded with huge blooms at least twelve inches across. I cannot imagine anything more beautiful for the garden. *Laura Dessert* is definitely a yellow peony here, even amateurs asked what the lovely yellow one was. Very profuse and long lasting in the yellow color. The reds all seem to do well and hold their color well in our climate. I don't seem to have a favorite, just the one that I look at. *June Brilliant*, *Louis Joliet*, *Felix Crousse* and *Cardinal*. *Mary Brand* is the only red that has been stingy so far. My newer reds are mostly one year plants, so I didn't expect much but should have a great thrill this year (1950) as I have most of the new ones. Last, but not least, the beautiful *Victory* that came from our Secretary. It is the only peony root that I would have called beautiful but it really was not a division but a strong young plant with all new roots. Placed in a large box with loving care like a queen on a throne. When it started to come up it looked rather weak and the foliage never was very

large but it produced five beautiful blooms, two of which were of show caliber. I cut them all and brought them in the house as we wanted to water that section. I like the smooth creamy texture with each petal in perfect place. My first choice for white. What a pity all roots couldn't be grown like that, how much less work when we go to dig them. I sort of fell over board in buying new high priced varieties this year but the only reason we are interested commercially is to have these fine things that we could not otherwise afford in a Hobby Garden.

I think our Editor deserves great praise in giving us such a fine Bulletin. They make good reading for many years to come for good peonies do not go "out of style" like some other plants do. I hope we can soon have a new Manual, leave out the expensive color cuts and give more information. From our limited experience it looks as though most varieties are going to do well in our climate and I do not know of another plant that gives so much for so little attention after being well planted. I like all the varied articles in the Bulletin and hope they get bigger and better.

Mr. Christman, this has developed into quite a lengthy paper, use what, if any that you see fit. Perhaps this will encourage some others in this climate to plant more peonies.

With best wishes,

Very truly yours,

MRS. F. B. EYLAR

\* \* \*

## Auction of Peonies

Throught the generous contribution of some of the members of the American Peony Society, the following list of peonies are still available and will be sold to the highest bidder. This bulletin is very late and as a consequence we did not get the report to you sooner. There is still time if you will within the next ten days, send your best bid for the variety you would like, as shown in the following tabulation of varieties still available, to Mr. Clarence Lienau, Lienau Peony Gardens, 25804 Joy Road, Detroit, 28, Michigan. If your bid is the highest for that particular variety, you will be billed on later and the party donating the root will be advised to mail it to you direct. If, in the opinion of the Committee, your bid is entirely too low, it will not be considered. However, any reasonable bid will have consideration.

Here is a rare opportunity to secure some of the finest peonies grown to add to your collection, and at the same time you will be helping out your Society. It is imperative that we build up our treasury balance and your purchase of these roots will accomplish this. You are at liberty to bid on as many of these varieties as you choose. The more the better. Every variety offered is really worth while and some are the finest peonies obtainable anywhere. This is not an effort to move worthless varieties, as the donors offering them are the outstanding peony growers of the country. All have the full endorsement of the American Peony Society. Peony catalogs you doubtless have on hand will show you most of the retail value of these offerings. *Remember, these varieties will all be sold to the highest bidder.* Send in your offer by return mail, if possible.

The list available follows:

5 A. B. Franklin -2 Bella Donna-1 Big Ben-1 Blush Queen-1 Border Gem  
1 Bowl of Beauty-1 Break O'Day-4 Burma-1 Chippewa-2 Countess Maritza  
3 Dainty Lass-1 Dauntless-3 Diana-1 Dignity-2 Dr. Brethour-2 Ecstasy  
2 Ethel Mars -3 Evening Star -1 Florence Nicholls-1 Gay Cavalier-1 Gay-

border June—1 George W. Peyton—1 Hansina Brand—3 Hans P. Sass—3 Helen Hughes—1 James Pillow—1 June Rose—1 King Midas—2 Laddie 1 Lotus Queen—1 Mary E. Nicholls—2 Miss Eckhart—4 Minuet—1 Moonglow 1 Mothers Day—3 Mount Everest—2 Mrs. Frank Beech—1 Mrs. F. D. Roosevelt 1 Naomi—2 Nebraska—2 New Delight—2 Odile—3 Philippe Rivoire—1 Pink Glow—3 Queen of Hamburg—3 Queen of Sheba—1 Red Ball—1 Red Cloud—1 Rio Grande—1 Robert Auten—2 Rose Marie—1 Saganore—2 Smiles—1 Sea Shell—1 Salmon Glow—1 Snow Cloud—2 Tondeleyo—2 Victory—1 Vogue—3 White Batson

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## A History of the Peony Modern American Breeders

R. F. KOBY, *Superior, Wis.*

In articles preceding this one on The History of the Peony much has been written pertaining to the work of the breeders of Europe and America. Much has been written about the early American breeders including both men and women. We shall try not to repeat too frequently of their accomplishments as we attempt to portray the roll of the modern breeder and the lasting marks he will leave in the progress of peony development. Many of these are apparent and the individual who has wrought these changes and worked so diligently may still be with us.

It might not be out of place to start with Archie Brand, son and partner of O. F. Brand, whose interesting letters have been included in former articles. Archie Brand was confronted with operating a Nursery as well as attempting to develop new peonies. Young Brand was a law student and probably a thorough one too and his thoroughness followed him right through to the peony fields.

Mr. Brand, not possessing the technique of the biologist of his day, set about to make his own ideas work. Where he got them he probably can never tell, perhaps his father, perhaps from his contacts with other growers and perhaps from friends working in biology at the University of Minnesota. First his selection of seed was made from good plants and he relied upon insects to make the crosses in his breeding stock. After his plans were set up he let nature take its course. So he never hand pollinated as we will see some of our other modern breeders did. He planted three rows of stock off in a selected spot and the two outside rows were of one variety and the middle was of a high pollen producing variety and there they were left to produce seed which in turn was planted. As the years wore on much of the stock was discarded for it was probably no better, maybe not as good, as stock already in commerce. As other breeders, Mr. Brand made it a point not to introduce a variety if it were not superior in some way or other. To get a better idea of his experience turn to a preceding article on Peonies in America. It is only one of many romances with the peony.

A contemporary of Archie Brand is one of the greatest flowering plant breeders the world has ever known. Peonies and iris and kindred fields found his genius ever busy. Dessert, Lemoine Crousse, Lemon, Guerin, Dyck, Jacques, Mechin, or Mieliez while all great in their work were in no way superior to our great American breeder Hans Peter Sass. H. P. Sass was born September 19, 1868 at Alt Dunvestedt, Germany, and migrated to America in 1884 and eventually located on a farm near Omaha, Nebraska. In 1903 he purchased

80 acres near Washington, Nebraska and started flower growing in earnest. His work, arduous as it was, met with crowning success and Mr. Sass became world renowned for his plant breeding. The next few lines are extracts from personal letters of Mr. Sass. These few lines contain the crux of Hans Sass' ideas in his breeding and should be preserved, for it is doubtful that from his pen has ever before flown so much detailed information about his work as a breeder.

"My breeding of peonies extends back to 1908, and in 1930 I abandoned the breeding of peonies. Colchicine and other chemicals were not known those days, and from the beginning I resorted to cross fertilization. As an experiment, I planted seed from singles, but 85 per cent came single again. As seed parents, I selected the bomb type as they have no pollen and cannot self fertilize. At present, the Peony Society has thrown out the old type names like bomb, crown, anemone, and semi-rose. This is a mistake, as the old masters invented these names to distinguish these types.

"Bomb type I used mostly are *Edulis Superba*, *Felix Crousse*, *Mme. Ducel*, and *Mons. Jules Elie*. *Edulis Superba* is now discarded by the Society but is still the leading cut flower variety. It was introduced by Nicolas Lemon in 1824. I raised several good red peonies from this by crossing it with *Mons. Martin Cahuzac*. I never used the pollen of singles in my crosses, but only used semi-rose for the purpose. From *Mme Ducel* I raised most of my best peonies. They include *Elsa Sass*, *Coral Queen*, *Adonis*, and also the two singles, *Imperial Red* and *Sea Shell*.

"In 1938, I sold most of my peonies to Interstate Nursery of Hamburg, Iowa. Since then they have grown in favor. *Elsa Sass* received 9.47. Amongst the comments in the news bulletins, I note: And *Elsa* like *Carrara Marbles*. Another, 'I humbly take back the mean remark I made about *Elsa Sass* a few years ago.'

"I never took an active part in the Society; all I know is, 'We need more members.' I do not have any of the new peonies produced now. How they are developed I cannot say. The registrations do not mention seed parents."

From these comments we can see that Mr. Sass probably kept a close record of his hand pollinated seeds and used his records in furthering his breeding. He is the only one of the breeders that have mentioned that they stuck to the bomb type in breeding so as to be sure that new pollen from other plants would be introduced for sure. Mr. Sass failed to mention probably his finest red, *Carolyn Mae Nelson*, which as time passes will no doubt take its place with *H. P. Sass* and his *Elsa Sass*.

It can easily be understood why Mr. Sass never took part in the active work of the American Peony Society. Having been reared in Germany, he probably found it difficult to express himself freely in a foster tongue. Yet we know that Mr. Sass made up for his seemingly unsocial cooperation by his many prized introductions. He knew his limitation and preferred to act rather than talk. His work is now history and occupies an important place in the history of the peony in this country. Mr. Sass now resides at Bennington, Nebraska.

To those who read this article a reference should be made to A.P.S. Bulletin 91, published September 1943. In that bulletin is carried all of the recent breeders and their introductions up to that date. It is well worth your time to dig out that number and correlate it with the facts that are contained in this article.

A. B. Franklin, originator of the Franklin Nursery of Minneapolis, Minnesota and introducer of many Franklin varieties, was a great friend of A. M. Brand as well as a contemporary of both Brand and Sass. The three might be known as the Mid West Triumverate, for they featured each other's offerings in their peony listings.

Franklin probably stuck to peonies closer than Brand or Sass, who each were interested in other scopes of endeavor, while Franklin spent most of his time with peonies alone. He was a prolific breeder and we might say the greatest exclusive peony breeder of his day. His stock all shows a line of procedure, well told by his son Loren, who took over the management of the Nursery in 1942 when A. B. Franklin passed away. These lines from Loren's pen should be preserved, for they briefly, yet exactly, tell the guiding principles his father followed. Notice Loren refers to his father as a hybridizer, which we must infer means that he employed all the latest methods of crosses known at the time he was breeding peonies. Loren's lines are as follows:

"Father's ambition as a hybridizer was to produce the perfect peony, and he plowed back most of his profits in an effort to attain that goal. He believed that, besides having exquisite form, fine texture, pleasing color, and delightful fragrance, a flower to be near perfection must be supported by a stem strong enough to properly display those qualities, even under adverse weather conditions. Most of his introductions are of this strong stemmed type. In later years it became almost an obsession with him. He believed that no new varieties should be put on the market unless they added something to the peony world; either different or better than anything already produced. He used this principle as his yardstick for all his introductions."

Logically the next introducer should be Edward Auten, Jr., who was born in 1861 at Princeville, Illinois, where he has resided all his life. He graduated from Harvard University in 1904. Two of his hobbies have been sacred music and peonies. His musical activities include twenty years service as church organist, and a composer of sacred music, none of which, according to Mr. Auten, attained more than local publicity. In 1910, having become disgusted with winter losses and thorns on roses, he quit them and made his first planting of peonies. This hobby has developed into a full time business and has resulted in the origination and introduction of more than 225 new varieties of peonies.

As we scan the lines written by Edward Auten we can see in his personality a born creator, a mind that is seeking something new and something different, something artistic. Only a person of creative makeup could possess such interests and in the advertising of his peonies he says, "Something Different."

In the following lines Mr. Auten refers to his work with crosses of the ....officinalis strain giving new and finer varieties and his care of selecting parent stock as being a great factor in his success of bringing out new varieties and ideas. Also will be noticed that he attempted to bring out a flower that would be a sure opener and that is all important for the warmer climes. It is true that the large blooms always open here in the north and the entire bloom is a most gorgeous display of beauty and fragrance. My comment often is, the larger the bloom the more there is for great beauty. Mr. Auten's individual difference is again shown by the fact that if the public likes a peony it will sell and the grade points of the A.P.S. doesn't really tell the story of the peony. So we have a man in this fellow Auten who dares to think. Read and enjoy these lines as has prepared them for our information.

"As to aims in Peony breeding I had none when I started out, just simply thought I would see what I could do. First seed was planted about 1916, and first introductions in 1925. In 1923, one of the most prominent Peony growers told me I was wasting my time, that there were enough good peonies already. That the possibilities had already been just about exhausted. Since then he took time more than once to tell me how wrong he had been.

"As I got into the work, one of my first discoveries was that we did not have to be satisfied with reds that went dead as the bloom aged. In all types of bloom, double, single, and Japanese, I was able to secure clear reds that held their good color as the bloom aged, or when sudden heat struck them. This latter point is of especial importance in the southern two-thirds of the peony belt. Of course, I always sought good stems and plant vigor.

"Soon I realized that the field in Japs and singles was almost untouched. Many of the Japs from Japan were slow growers, and many of most outrageous colors. In the singles, hardly one of the older kinds was worth keeping. You might be surprised to know that one of the most difficult things to get is a first class deep pink single. Most singles are lovely when they first open, but most of them also start to fade within a day or so, and also have poor substance. I looked at thousands before I selected *Elfin Pink*.

"In white doubles, I sought rose fragrance and refinement in color and texture. Extreme size has never meant much to me and I have discarded a good many big ones. Like most other originators, I have accomplished least with the dark pink doubles, but *Pink Monarch* has class, and *Cathie Ann* comes nearer to a 100 per cent rating for commercial use than any other kind I know. Some exquisite light pink doubles however have in part made up for the small number of dark pink doubles.

"Of course I have had countless failures in my work. One project which worked out just as successfully as hoped for was my search for new white Japs. I got just what I tried for, and more good ones than I will ever introduce.

"In the officinalis hybrids, working with Albiflora pollen, the careful choice of pollen varieties paid big dividends, for here, as with the pure Albiflora reds, we get some dirty, fading colors, and others non fading and of extreme clarity and brilliance. I never worked as much with the hybrids as I wanted to, did not have time.

"I never tried Colchicine on Peonies, and don't understand the full story of its possibilities. But as I understand it, it is primarily a destructive process, and is valuable only on the chance that the destruction (or variation) will halt at some point that will give something new that is worthwhile. My concept may be wrong, but anyway I decided to let it alone. I did get some seed X-rayed once, and got a red bomb type bloom with Jappy yellow edges on center petals. Never named it, though it is a nice flower. It may not be the result of the X-ray, as I have had variations just as striking from ordinary seed. Some of my originations are definitely novelties. I do not expect everyone to like them, but they sell to people who see them in bloom, that is, some of the people.

"I have used both hand pollenized and naturally pollenized seed, with good results from both methods. But with so many fine kinds now, one is foolish to use seed not hand pollenized. I never supposed one could get reds in the pure Albiflora kinds to equal the pure reds of the officinalis hybrids, but some of my newest seedlings come very close. One factor I have always sought has been SURE BLOOMING in the late doubles. Many kinds which look like



a million dollars in cool climates like Minnesota are no good at all down here. *Mrs. A. M. Brand* is one such variety. On the other hand, my *Virginia Lee*, *Cleopatra*, *Plymouth*, and others never fail even in hot weather here in Illinois.

"I never had time to do all the pollenizing and seed planting I wanted to do. After thirty years, I feel that if I could start all over again, I would at least really be prepared to make still greater improvements in Peonies. But I think I am done planting seed. I have still over 100 advanced seedlings under trial, and several hundred unbloomed seedlings, among them 300 hybrids."

Two contemporaries of the prolific introducers told about in the preceding lines are Ernest F. Kelsey, now deceased and Col. J. C. Nicholls. These two men were prolific breeders and only Mr. Christman of the APS could tell which of these gentlemen made the greatest number of introductions after he had actually counted the names registered with him. Off hand it seems that Mr. Kelsey perhaps had made the greatest number of introductions. Remain that as it may be, we think of the two as the Gold Dust Twins of the peony world for they seemed to like much the same kind of a plant. A nice full flower on an adequate stem produced by a plant of good habits. Mr. Nicholls may have produced more Japs than Mr. Kelsey for in the introductions shown in Bulletin 91, of September 1943, Ernest Flint Kelsey had mostly double varieties shown while Mr. Nicholls showed several Japs in his collection. I am sorry not to have a personal word from Mr. Nicholls on his theories and practices in his breeding for a letter was sent him, but we suppose that after a man has written as much about peonies as Mr. Nicholls must have he likes to take a rest when it comes to telling what he did and didn't do as a young "feller."

*Marilla Beauty* is a good sample of what Mr. Kelsey liked in a flower and *Mrs. Livingston Farrand* serves as a sample of the great beauty sought for by Mr. Nicholls. How these two men did it we do not know. Maybe we shall try again to get a few lines from Mr. Nicholls. It would go swell with the fine stories in such an article as this.

J. F. Rosenfield must not be forgotten in this article though his work with peony breeding is over. Mr. Rosenfield produced many very fine varieties and shared his ideas with the men mentioned in this article.

F. H. Allison, Shaylor's successor and partner, has found it kept him busy with running the establishment and his introductions have not kept pace with some of the other professional growers. *Nick Shaylor* is one of his introductions prior to 1943.

Lyman D. Glasscock of Elwood, Illinois is a hybridizer of no mean ability yet he failed to even divulge a hint as to his techniques when writing the first part of the year. He and Mr. Auten have collaborated on several introductions.

It is regrettable that some way or other information could not have been gathered regarding techniques used by Dr. J. H. Neely of Paulding, Ohio, W. L. Gumm, Remington, Indiana, and Harry Little, Camillus, N.Y.

Howard E. Wigell, Rockford, Illinois, has made several introductions but his techniques are not known by the writer. *Lois Q. Gayle* is one of his introductions. R. H. Jones of Peru, Indiana, has made several introductions and it is too bad that we do not have his principles and ideas of breeding to present. *Dorothy J.* is a good standard to judge his work by.

J. V. Edlund of White Bear has been influenced by the Twin City growers and has made a few but excellent introductions. How he did it we do not know. And there are so many others that have fine records that it is indeed regrettable they were not given a chance to elucidate and tell us all how they did it or what they were striving for.

We dare not close this article without telling something about the KIDS of the game. Myron D. Bigger of Topeka, Kansas, who is taking his place in the Sunflower State, as a peony propagator and breeder. Here is what he says, "In growing seedlings, I did not have any particular aim, except to find better peonies if it were possible. My time was limited, and space was not too plentiful at that time, and now it is even more limited, so I grew a few from the best parents I could select. I let the bees and moth do the hybridizing. They could think of more crosses and had more time to work at it. I usually planted seed of a good variety that did have pollen. *Festiva Maxima* and *Mons. Jules Elie* are both fine parents. *Mary Brand* gave me *Kansas*, and *Westerner* came from mixed seeds that must have been good varieties, or I would not have gathered them."

"Peony crossing is a very slow process and takes a lot of patience. They do not germinate until the second spring after they are planted, and then do not bloom for several more, so you can see, you have to have a lot of them coming along if you do not want the time to go slow."

Thus Mr. Bigger sums up his efforts in breeding peonies. His introductions have been very popular in Kansas according to Mr. Moots of Newton.

The second of the KIDS is our good friend out at Cologne, Minnesota. Mr. E. H. Lins. Those of you who know Mr. Lins know full well that he is no kid any more, in the physical sense or in the field of hybridizing. We have no data on the early life of Mr. Lins. He has been a successful merchant, farmer, and gardener at Cologne, Minn., for many years. As the name indicates he is of German extraction and has spent a great deal of time in bringing out new varieties in peonies and gladiolas. His work has been painstaking and has been prompted from a scientific standpoint. He has been very careful to use parent stock of high quality for his combinations. He has many outstanding creations in the gladiolus world. He has *Black Panther*, *Stoptlight*, *Rio Rita*, *Beltrami*, *Virgin*, and *Royal Robes*, and a host of other topflight gladiolus that can well grace any person's garden. His peony introductions such as *Casablanca*, *Tondeleyo*, *King Midas*, and *Burma* are only a few of several very high class peonies that have already caught the eye of a very critical public. Mr. Lins now in his late forties, has an opportunity to establish a breeding record excelled by none, and equalled by very few. In fact, his business is a creation of new ideas; the other fellow does the work of propagating his introductions.

Mr. Lins in summing up his ideas and techniques on breeding has this to say, "No one plant breeder has a 'Corner' on the production of worthwhile varieties. All we can do is to try to combine parent varieties, which in our opinion, will produce superior varieties. Nature has to do the rest. Most seedlings produced even from selected parents are worthless. They have to grow for years, to determine which is which. The process of propagating a stock of a worthwhile seedling takes 12 to 15 years, which explains why a good peony is high priced.

"All peony breeders are striving for the production of a fully transformed double peony, with beautiful form and exquisite color, combined with good plant habits, stiff stems, with foliage way down. The perfect, fully transformed,

double peony cannot be used in breeding, as it has neither stamens nor carpels." Mr. Lins does hand pollinate and practically all his work is carefully recorded and his notes kept as he progresses with his breeding and rearing plans.

The peony has a great friend in Minneapolis, Minnesota, from among the classmates of Archie Brand. Breeder's records will never show it to this date. But this friend of the peony dates back a long time, he knows what Brand did and what peonies Sass turned out and the nice ones that were created by J. V. Edlund, and E. H. Lins and all the rest. He has not had only one planting of his own in his back yard, but he also spent hundreds of dollars preparing a spot up at his summer cabin on the North Shore of Lake Superior, so that he could watch his favorites, bloom and fade away while he was vacationing up where the big trout hit hardest.

William Tecumseh Coe holds that distinction, or did hold that distinction until he sold his summer cottage and plot of land to the Taconite expansion people who will convert that area into a great industrial scheme. According to Mr. Coe he has never made an introduction of a peony, but he is hopeful that the Good Lord will persevere with him on this earth long enough for him to make a few introductions that he says will be better than anything that has ever been seen in its class. The writer believes this is true for he has some seedlings now that are very excellent, and small segments of these roots are now in his garden at Superior, Wisconsin.

For the sake of identification, for Mr. Coe has not named his peonies yet, one is known as *Coe's Big Red Jap*. Big, well there is nothing like it for size if it will do for the rest of us what it did for Mr. Coe in his Summer Home Garden near Silver Bay, Minnesota. This Jap stands nearly five feet tall and has a very deep red bloom, with very nice red and yellow staminoids that is indeed attractive. Secondly he has a pink Jap that is named for the time and for the lack of a better name, *Coe's Big Pink Jap*. It is fully as large as *Coe's Big Red Jap* and is a beautiful pink. A double of Mr. Coe's origin is what has been called also for want of a better name *Coe's Black Beauty*, a full double of the deepest hue of black red that can be imagined. It is all the name implies, a real black beauty.

These and others are a result of crosses of the big Jap *Fuyajo*, *Mons. Martin Cahuzac* and a large pink the name of which he was not certain. From that combination he has about four hundred seedlings and from other combinations still others from which he hopes to draw upon for his introductions. We hope that his realization comes true for there is nothing now in color, size and texture that resembles either of those mentioned above.

In these lines you have a pretty good idea of the way our modern breeders have gone about the production of the grandest peony stock ever to grace the face of the earth. Without a doubt they are the world's best. With this group of modern contemporaries you have the one which should be known as a futurist. Mr. Coe, though well along in his seniority still is very youthful in his spirit. We will make no predictions yet we hope that Mr. Coe can join the other great breeders with his name inscribed upon the sheets of the American Peony Society as being one of its enthusiastic breeders.

It can easily be seen that our breeders all have approached their work as individuals and all have gone about it in a different manner. In a preceding article we touched upon the accomplishments of the women in peony breeding and it will be found that they too have been looking for something of interest to themselves. This causes us to conclude that a faint heart ne'er won a fair peony.

(Note: Both Mr. Sass and Mr. Cole died recently—Editor)  
(Essay Contest)

## Mr. E. J. Berneche a Great, Great Grandfather

Mr. E. J. Berneche of 3903 S.W. Baird St., Portland, 19, Oregon, has just sent me the following article that appeared in the March 20 issue of The Oregonian. Mr. Berneche is known to many of us and for many of his 86 years he has spent with his beloved peonies. He states in his letter of transmission that 45 years ago he bought his first peonies from Oliver Brand & Son of Faribault, Minn. He retired two years ago but is still interested in his flowers. We trust he may enjoy many more years and happy reunions with his grandchildren. The article follows:

Five generations filled the modest home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward J. Berneche, 86-year-old retired peony grower of Multnomah, and quickened the heart and memory of great-great-grandfather Sunday.

Family and flowers vied for nearly a lifetime of care from this Canadian born nurseryman, but Sunday it was entirely a family affair at 3903 S. W. Baird street.

Four great-great-grandchildren romped underfoot as the smiling, bright-eyed patriarch and the three generations between reminisced and talked of the many directions in which they have scattered.

Berneche decided to quit peony growing commercially two years ago, but found it a gradual move. He still dabbles in lilacs and other shrubs.

### Peonies Real Favorites

Peonies are his first love in the flower world. Berneche claims to be the first peony fancier and grower in the Northwest, having started in 1908 on Capitol point, now a part of the capitol site in Olympia, Wash. He moved in 1923 to Multnomah, where he has grown up to nine acres of peonies in one year.

He originated numerous new varieties of the big blooms and thinks four or five of them are among the good ones. He holds a double handful of sweepstakes, gold and silver medals won at western flower shows.

Born to French-Canadian parents northeast of Montreal in 1864, Berneche feels he is almost a Yankee. The family spent eight years of his childhood in Massachusetts, then returned to Canada. But at 14 he came back by himself.

With Josephine, whom he married at 21, and their family they moved west to Seattle in 1897 and bought a grocery in time to outfit scores of gold hunters bound for the Klondike. Mrs. Berneche died in 1899, and five years later, after he entered the bakery business at Olympia, he married his present wife, Mary May.

Some of his venturesome nature has been transmitted to his progeny, their stories indicate.

His daughter, Eva Alvey Richards, who was present from Yakima, Wash., is author of "Arctic Mood," which told of her three years as a teacher and nurse among the Eskimos at Wainwright, Alaska. The work, with Literary Guild aid, has run to nearly 90,000 copies.

At 65 she is working on final chapters for "Child Pioneer," about early days in the Mesabi iron range of Minnesota. She illustrates her own works.

### Son in War Service

Her son—and Berneche's grandson—Melvin G. Alvey, of Coos Bay, retired after nearly 27 years in the coast guard, in which he was a lieutenant during the war. He now is a sport boat builder.

Alvey's daughter and one of two sons—all greatgrandchildren of Berneche—attended the Sunday reunion. William J. Alvey, A World War II veteran, is forestry department foreman for Weyerhaeuser at Allegany, near Coos Bay.

The daughter, Mrs. Charlene Hill, is an Albany dairyman's wife. She and William between them have four children, all great-great grandchildren of the proud ex-peony grower.

But these aren't all, Berneche grinned. He has a son and daughter in California, and they account for two other great-great grandchildren there.

\* \* \*

## Success With Peonies

Peonies are so hardy and have such a tenacity for living, it is hard to visualize why they would not be successful if a few simple rules are followed, which is true of every plant grown. They require a well drained location where the sun is present the larger part of the day.

The early fall months seem best suited for planting operations. They can also be planted in the spring, with success, if the divisions or plants have been dug in the fall and properly stored throughout the winter months.

The buds should be placed approximately two inches below the surface of the earth when planted. In the south, more shallow planting is recommended. Care should be exercised to keep them away from heavy shrubbery or trees where the moisture would not be sufficient for their proper development and the ground would be depleted of its fertilization properties.

While the peony will give fair results with little care, it is only reasonable to expect that with ample cultivation, remarkable results will be obtained. Due to the fact that the peony will tolerate a great deal of neglect, often leads to total indifference or disregard, which will finally result in loss of your peonies. Properly cared for they will last a life time, so an investment in peonies is a worthwhile venture, as one cannot lose.

Be sure the roots you plant are healthy. This can be assured by purchasing from reliable growers in whom you have implicit faith. Cheap peonies, bargain lots, clearance sales are all guide posts for caution. Cheap peonies may be diseased peonies which would be very undesirable at any cost. Cheap bargain lots often prove to be just that, cheap and undesirable. Clearance sales quite likely contain varieties not desirable. This does not always hold true, however, but caution must be used in each instance before a large outlay is expended.

Be sure to select a permanent position for your peonies, if this is possible, for after a plant is established, it will take it some time to recover after being replanted. If this should happen, be sure to divide the plant or plants you move for best results. Standard divisions of three to five eyes have been found most satisfactory.

In planting operations, avoid commercial fertilizer coming in direct contact with the roots. This also applies to manure or other similar material. Directions for planting peonies often carry these words, "peonies are gross feeders" and this has led to many failures. They can be killed by over applications of fertilizers. They resent it and become anemic, the leaves and stems will turn yellow and if not removed to a new location they will pass out of the picture. It will also take them some time to recover their normal health, even if they are removed. If this replanting is necessary due to over-feeding, place them in ground without any fertilizer whatever, until they have had a chance to recover.

Too deep planting is the chief cause for failure to bloom. The buds that appear on the crown should be placed approximately two inches below the

surface of the ground when planted. In the south, more shallow planting is recommended.

Remember the plant receives a great deal of its growing properties from the air in the form of oxygen and nitrogen. This means that if the plants are cut down immediately after flowering, you are depriving the plant of needed nourishment that will be detrimental to root development. When cutting flowers, leave at least two sets of leaves to each stem to provide these elements. This is practiced by commercial growers, who, in addition, leave at least two or three blooms on each plant when cutting operations are completed. Severe cutting weakens the plant growth and the plant will eventually deteriorate to such a degree that it is worthless.

The foliage of a peony plant is most interesting and attractive as well as decorative. Let it remain on the plant until after heavy frosts have done their work. The foliage, if left over winter, will provide sufficient covering to protect the plant from heaving during the winter months. If foliage is not removed in late fall, be sure to take care of this work very early in the spring before growth starts. Peony plants when they first make their appearance in the Spring are very brittle and are damaged easily. They can be broken as easily as asparagus in their early development. This foliage remains decorative throughout the entire growing season and makes landscape borders most attractive. There is a wide variation in color, leaf formation and in the many types of Tree Peonies, Hybrids and Herbaceous sorts in singles, semi-doubles and full rose types or doubles, with a wide color range in each class, gives one an almost endless amount of combinations possible.

Newly planted peonies should be mulched the first season, or until they become established and have sufficient root growth to prevent heaving. We have seen well established plants, thoroughly established, torn loose from the crown by alternate freezing and thawing during the winter season. This does not happen very often, and it is fortunate that it doesn't.

Some complain that the peony is not in bloom for a long enough period in spring to pay for bothering with it. By judicious selection of the different species it is possible to have two months blooming season. To do this, start in with the tree peonies, followed by the specie and hybrid varieties and end up with the herbaceous types.

Peonies do well in most sections of the United States with the exception of the extreme southern states. We are getting favorable reports of their performance over a very wide area, including some southern states.

Plant peonies liberally and see how generously you will be repaid for your trouble. They will not fail you but each year will supply lovely flowers and attractive foliage throughout the growing season.

W. F. CHRISTMAN, *Secretary*



## CLOSING OUT STOCK

One of the finest collections of peonies is to be sold to anyone interested in having a fine collection of peonies in many varieties, consisting of some of the best obtainable.

Prefer to sell entire stock to one party if possible. Anyone contemplating going into the peony business for pleasure or profit will have an excellent opportunity of obtaining this start at a reasonable cost. Several hundred varieties in several thousand plants are in the lot.

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**ENSIGN MORIARTY**—Very large full double heavy bloom on very strong stems which hold the great bloom perfectly erect. Color is medium dark pink blending lighter pink on petal edges. Fine garden plant and a great exhibition flower. Has won CHAMPION RIBBON in dark pink class. Blooms late midseason and is good every year. .... \$15.00

**GARDENIA**—Although shown first time in 1949, peony experts have already given it their approval. The perfect plants with strong stems, which hold the large bloom perfectly erect, are loaded each year with very large double, beautifully formed Gardenia like bloom. The form, texture and substance of the bloom suggested its name. Cut in bud the bloom is flesh and when allowed to bloom on the plant the bloom is a beautiful giant gardenia formed white. It won the CHAMPION RIBBON in flesh class in 1950. Good garden and show variety. You can win with Gardenia. Blooms midseason, ..... \$10.00



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