

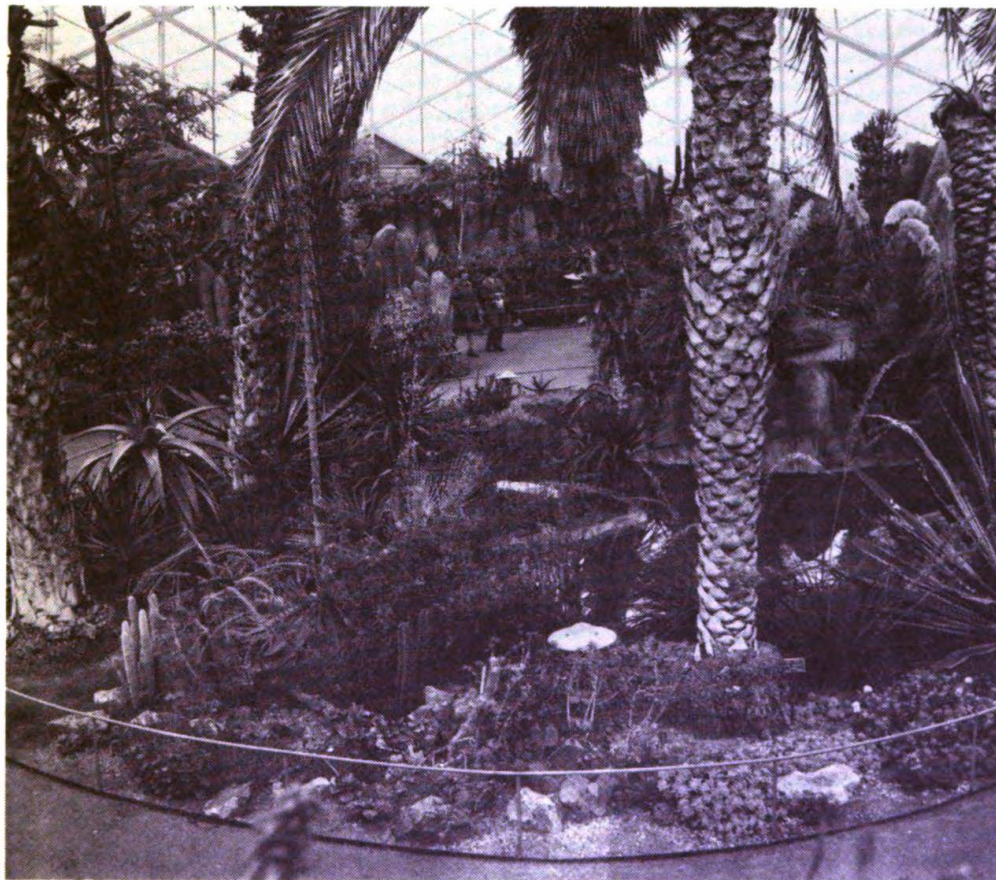
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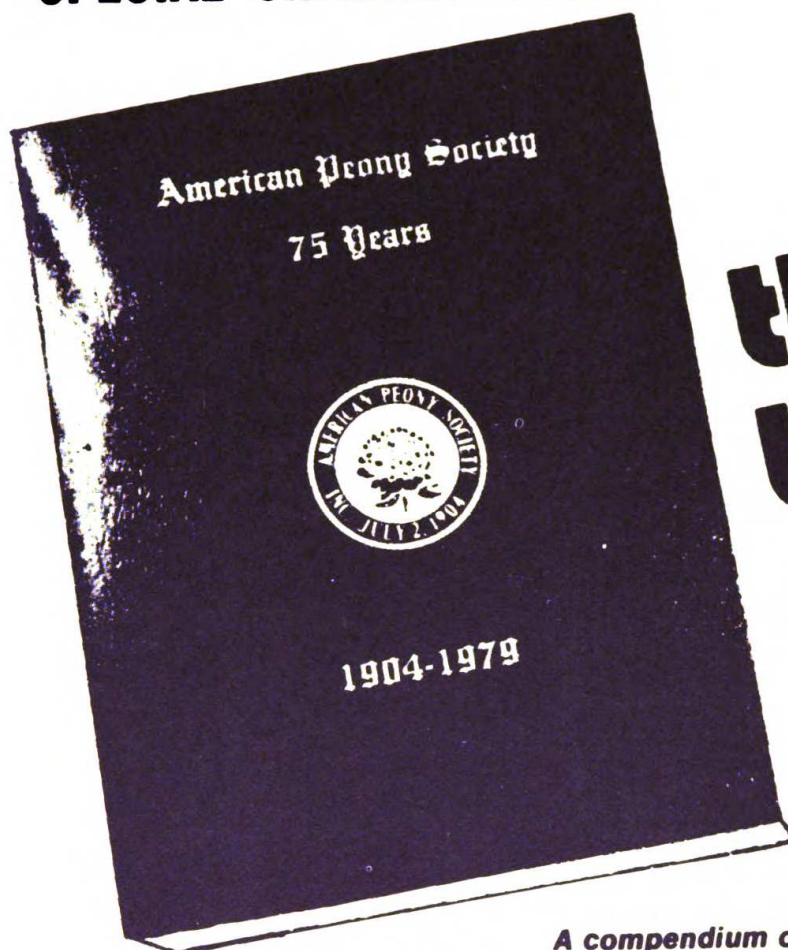
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# The American Peony Society Bulletin





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by Greta M. Kessenich

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### DEPT. OF REGISTRATION

The department was formed to properly supervise the nomenclature of the different varieties and kinds of peonies. All new varieties should be registered to avoid duplication of names.

Greta M. Kessenich, Secretary

### OBJECTIVES

The Articles of Incorporation state: Section (2) That the particular objects for which the corporation is to be formed are as follows: To increase the general interest in the cultivation and use of the Peony; to improve the methods of its cultivation and methods of placing it upon the market; to increase its use as a decorative flower; to bring about a more thorough understanding between those interested in its culture; to properly supervise the nomenclature of the different varieties and kinds of peonies; to stimulate the growing and introduction of improved seedlings and crosses of such flower; and to promote any kind of the general objects herein specified by holding or causing to be held exhibitions, and awarding or causing or procuring to be awarded, prizes therefor or in any other manner.

The AMERICAN PEONY SOCIETY BULLETIN is the official Society publication. It is mailed postpaid quarterly to all members in good standing.

### MEMBERSHIP

The By-Laws state: All reputable persons, professional or amateur, who are interested in the Peony, its propagation, culture, sale and development are eligible for membership. Dues are as follows:

Single Annual.....	\$ 7.50	Junior or member family.....	\$ 2.50
Single Triennial.....	20.00	Life.....	150.00
Family Annual.....	10.00	Commercial membership.....	25.00
Family Triennial.....	27.50		

Family membership, any two related members in same household..... One Bulletin  
Junior membership, any age through completion of high school..... Separate Bulletin

For those who wish to further support the Society, the following special memberships are available.

Contributing.....	\$25.00	Supporting.....	\$100.00
Sustaining.....	50.00	Patron.....	250.00



# AMERICAN Peony Society Bulletin



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June 1983 — No. 246

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## FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

This winter, and spring, has been unusual throughout the United States as most areas have had so much rain and it continued for a long period of time. Locally, the peony season is one to two weeks later than usual.

Here in Kansas, the cool wet spring led to extra problems with our plantings. Some roots were lost to rotting because of the prolonged wet weather. Providing good draining at the time of planting, will pay off at some time when weather conditions are a repeat of this year. Fungus diseases thrive in cool wet weather, so I hope you have not neglected to spray this spring.

The Milwaukee show is June 17-18-19. Bring your peonies and enjoy the Blue Ribbons that will be yours.

See you at the beautiful Domes—it is there that the peonies will be displayed.

Edward Lee Michau

### ***BULLETIN COVER.***

***Exhibition dome with zone controlled temperatures for succulents at the Mitchell Horticultural Conservatory in Milwaukee, site of the 1983 National Peony Exhibition.***

***Picture—Courtesy, The Milwaukee Journal, Milwaukee, Wisconsin***

# THE 80TH ANNUAL MEETING 78TH ANNUAL EXHIBITION OF THE AMERICAN PEONY SOCIETY

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

June 17, 18, 19, 1983

*All events except the Annual Banquet at the Mitchell Horticultural Conservatory (The Domes); Headquarters and Annual Banquet at the Marc Plaza Hotel, 509 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53203, (414) 271-7250.*

## SEE HORTICULTURAL SCHEDULE—MARCH BULLETIN SCHEDULE OF ARTISTIC DIVISION

**Rules:** This is a standard flower show and will be judged by National Council Flower Show Judges whose decisions are final. The artistic division is open to all members of the Milwaukee District Garden Clubs and members of the American Peony Society. (The American Peony Society will set rules for the Horticulture Division.)

Artistic entries must be checked by the classification committee before being placed. Entries may be placed between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, June 18. Late entries will be accepted, placed by the committee, but will not be judged.

Only the judges, clerks, chairman of judges and the classification chairman will be allowed in the exhibit area during judging. The show chairman and schedule chairman will be available during this time. Classes in the Artistic division may not be subdivided.

Advance entries must be made by telephone to the artistic entries chairman, Mrs. Robert Larkin (414) 246-6733, by June 5, 1983. If for any reason an exhibitor is unable to exhibit, he/she must secure a substitute and should so inform Mrs. Larkin.

Exhibitors must maintain their exhibits in good condition and must remove them on Sunday, June 19th between 5 and 6:00 p.m. Exhibitors are responsible for cleaning up their own areas both when placing an entry and when removing it.

No artificial flowers, fruits, vegetables or foliage may be used. As this is a peony show, peonies must be used in each exhibit and must predominate. Artificially colored fresh plant material will not be allowed. Accessories, dried or treated material (plant) will not be permitted unless otherwise stated.

The Milwaukee District Garden Clubs, the American Peony Society, and Milwaukee Park Commission will not be responsible for loss or damage to exhibits, or to personal properties or to person, but will take reasonable precautions to prevent same.

Milwaukee District Liason - Mrs. Robert Larkin

Schedule Chairman - Mrs. Henry Dvorak

Artistic Entries Chairman - Mrs. Robert Larkin, W220 N5329  
Town Line Road, Sussex, Wisconsin 53089

# PEONY PASSPORT TO ENCHANTED LANDS

## **Class 1. Caribbean Islands - Tropical Wave Swept Shores.**

An arrangement using drift wood. Space 30 in. wide, 18 in. deep, no height limit.

4 entries

## **Class 2. Swiss Alps - Snowy Mountains.**

An all white arrangement, minimum of green foliage. Minimum of dried material may be included. Staged in front of a 24 in. wide x 36 in high sky-blue background.

4 entries

## **Class 3. England - A Countryside Garden.**

A mass arrangement with peonies predominating. Staged on white pedestals 24 in. x 24 in, 40 in. from floor.

4 entries

## **Class 4. Congo - Drama of the Jungle.**

An arrangement with brilliant colors predominating. Staged in a white niche 40 in. high x 28 in. wide with 18 in. wings - may be draped.

4 entries

## **Class 5. China - Elegant and Ageless.**

An arrangement in an oriental manner. Staged in a pale green niche 40 in. high x 32 in. wide with 16 in. wings - may be draped.

4 entries

## **AWARDS**

1st Place - Blue Ribbon

2nd Place - Red Ribbon

3rd Place - Yellow Ribbon

Honorable Mention - White Ribbon

Grand Champion Award - May be given to any blue ribbon winner scoring 95 or above. Traditional, modern or abstract is acceptable.

## **SCALE OF POINTS**

Design .....	35
Interpretation .....	10
Color .....	25
Creative Expression .....	10
Condition .....	10
Distinction .....	10

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100

Milwaukee District Garden Clubs, Inc.

Member of: Wisconsin Garden Club Federation

National Council of State Garden Clubs

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# SHOW YOUR FLOWERS

*by Myron D. Bigger, Bulletin #109*

Be sure to show all the flowers that you can in all the shows that are near you this year. You can win just as well as anyone else if only you will think so.

Remove all trash and dead tops from your peony plants and burn them as soon as you can. Keep the weeds and trash away from the plants so that they can breathe, and keep them cultivated at all times from the time they come out of the ground until the frost kills down the tops in the fall.

When the plants come out of the ground watch them closely and as soon as you can possibly do it, remove all the side buds, leaving only the one large terminal buds on each stem. This is best done by taking hold of the terminal bud and stretching it taut so that it will not break so easily, then with the free hand give the side bud a quick break out sideways. With a little practice this becomes easy. It is easiest just after a rain because the buds are not sticky and are more brittle. As a rule, the side buds are not large enough until the plants are about a foot high.

About a week before the peonies bloom you should put a half-pound brown paper bag upside down over each bloom that you wish to take to the show and either tie the top of the bag shut or you may staple, pin or use a rubber band to keep it shut so that it will not come off in the wind and rain. Be very careful to leave the stem and bud loose so that the flower can grow. If you do not, the stem might grow crooked. Get some kind of a label and label each bloom with its name so that you and everyone else can see the name all through the show. For this purpose you may use a price marking tag, or a wooden label. Use a No. 2 pencil; never ink or indelible because they will run.

Watch these sacks and labeled buds and the morning of the day that they feel like they are going to bloom cut them and take them to cold storage as quickly as you can. The sooner you can get them to storage the better your blooms will be.

Some growers say that it is better to store your blooms in water and others say that it is better to store them dry, so you may do whichever way pleases you. The main thing is to be sure to store them as near to 34 degrees Fahrenheit as possible.

About 24 hours before the show opens you should take them out of storage and cut about one-half inch off the end of each stem at a very steep angle and put them in water. This is best done in a cool place away from drafts. Three or four hours after they are put into water you may remove the sacks from the blooms. The sacks at this time will be almost full. The blooms will take a lot of water so keep your vases full.

After you have decided which class you wish to put each bloom, be sure that you have them labeled correctly, classified correctly, and the

number of blooms counted correctly. Any of these things wrong, might count you out. Be sure to read the rules of the show so that you have them all clearly in mind.

Do not hold back. Take your flowers to some show and try as hard as you can. If you do not win try again next year, and correct your mistakes.

The more blooms that are in the show the better the show and the more interest there is in the show. Bring some flowers even if it is only one bloom. It may win.

## THE JAPANESE TOUCH

*by Anthony De Blasi*

Nature isn't always right. Left to her devices, peonies today would hardly be more than glorified buttercups in white, red, or pink. Let me at once declare my love for buttercups. In fact, along with Thoreau, "at one leap I go from the just-opened buttercup to the life everlasting." In the field, buttercups are divine. In the garden, they are intruders, even if they are blood relatives of some of the plants growing there, such as peonies.

It is human—not natural—selection that has fetched from the peony's genetic well a host of garden-worthy plants of exceptional merit. The premier group among these are shrubs that flaunt colors of the rainbow (except blue) in sheens and textures to rival a monarch's wardrobe. A bio-engineering breakthrough? Hardly. Centuries ago, Zen Buddhist monks returning to Japan from their pilgrimage in China brought home some shrubby plants whose flowers captured their fancy, and in that moment began a noble meddling with nature. The result was the Japanese tree peony, an unnatural cross between a rare and beautiful flower of the wild and human imagination. Botanists would call these plants cultivars of *Paeonia suffruticosa*. I call them works of art.

When I first saw a tree peony, as a curious youngster wandering through a Japanese garden, I wondered how it was possible for such a huge flower to float in the air, so high above the ground, in defiance of the law of gravity. It was as though an invisible hand held it in place for me to observe and admire.

Its petals were like sheer white tissue. The light of the sky played through the translucent ripples and folds, while a yellow light shone from the center. The leaves—sharply notched into pointed segments arranged in groups of three within three—were not like any peony foliage I had seen before. If I touched this strange flower, would it dissolve in a mist—the illusion vanish?

I didn't touch the blossom but later I discovered that it would not have felt much different from a giant, semi-double rose. I learned that there were over a hundred varieties of these blue-bloods of the peony

clan, many over a century old! — that some had petals like silk, velvet, or crepe paper, dyed in many colors — that they could be smooth as a baby's cheek or look as if they had been wrinkled by a playful child.

I found that "Long Hedge of Camellias" (Yachiyo Tsubaki) illuminates the eye with a rich coral light. That "The Sun" (Taiyo) brims with scarlet brilliance. And "Floral Rivalry" (Hana Kiso) is dressed in frilly pink tints. That "Black Crane" (Koku Tsusu) stains the memory with its inky maroon. That each spring the "Minister of Flowers" (Hana Daigin) delivers an extravagant bouquet of immense purple "roses," steeped in rose perfume. That the swaying lavender ripples of wisteria are reflected in "Wisteria of Kamada" (Kamada Fuji). And I was to be dumbfounded that "Flight of Cranes" (Renkaku) could, in nine years, wing its way from a 6-inch transplant to a 6-foot mound of 77 blossoms, all open at once, each a shimmering white masterpiece! It was then that the catalog claim "lives for generations—bears a hundred or more blooms" sank in!

With the tree peony, you don't choose between quantity and quality. You get both. The usual laws of nature are bent a bit by this peony. Flying in the face of arctic cold, tropical heat, inundations of rain, desert dryness—neglect, even—the tree peony delivers where other plants often fail. Sounds like a perfect plant. Well, it's not perfect. But to see such great flowers and picturesque leaves all the time might be palling, in the same way we could conceivably grow sick of spring if it lasted all year.

The Japanese, rather more philosophical than we, appreciate the resonant intervals between lavish displays. Like the rests between musical phrases, pauses give shape to our experience. In Zen, space is essential to form. This percept enters into the openness of bloom of a Japanese tree peony which guarantees that each petal will assume a greater presence and importance in the overall composition. Similarly, the hiatus between blooming seasons—like the dramatic pauses between events in a Noh play—insures that the yearly burst of bloom will be perceived as the crest of a wave. The trough between peaks of activity is not a void to be lamented but a time for memory to indulge itself, anticipation to build up again, and the tree peony to renew itself.

If "having your cake and eating it too" applies to garden plants, then the Japanese tree peony is just such a dessert. It not only tops off the spring season with a remarkable show but is a neat, attractive plant throughout the year—one that is permanent. It needs no dividing every few years, like many perennials, and unlike most shrubs, you don't prune it. One feeding of bonemeal a year after it blooms, is all the nourishment a tree peony takes. No spraying is necessary. Nothing bothers the foliage except maybe a fly ball. And even if a clumsy animal tramples every stem to the ground, new stems will shoot up in the spring to replace the lost ones. (In which case the tree peony skips blooming for a year.)



The expense, the time, the trouble it takes to plant and get a tree peony going will be forgotten in that first moment when you have successfully conjured up the jewelled illusions of form and color that once existed in the exquisite imagination of an oriental poet-priest, now spread before your own eyes.

## FROM — TREE PEONY NOTES

*Written by Anthony J. De Blasi, March 1963, Bulletin #168*

The blossoms of the Japanese tree peonies seem to be at their best during the forenoon hours, say between 9 and 11. At this time the blooms are open widest and exude a certain aura of liveliness that must be seen to be appreciated.

For the benefit of those who have recently planted tree peonies for the first time, here are a few remarks to allay some qualms that may arise in your observation of these plants. If you are wondering what happened to your lutea hybrids, since their buds have turned brown and look quite dead, while the Japanese tree peonies show a life color in the bud all winter and may even be starting to swell, fear not. It is normal for luteas to look brown and dead during the winter, and they do not show signs of life until spring is definitely in the air. Getting started later than the Japanese accounts for their blooming later, a fortunate habit, for it would be almost unbearable to have both the lutea and suffruticosa hybrids blooming simultaneously! Such a delightful disaster would also eclipse the blooming period of tree peonies from 3 weeks to about 12 days!

Another possible cause for alarm might be the sudden appearance, after blooming, of a deep brown color creeping up the stem of the current season's growth on Japanese hybrids. This is merely a sign that the stem is maturing into wood and the unnatural shade of brown will gradually lighten to a normal coloration as the season progresses.

Perhaps, after great care in planting, you discover to your dismay, one summer day, that your plant has suddenly wilted, as though from lack of water (though it has rained or you have watered regularly). If the root of this plant was a good one to begin with, chances are it did not get a sufficient chance to establish itself and the plant has simply "retired" underground. If you cannot wait until next spring to see if a new stem will arise from the root, dig very carefully during the fall around the base of the plant, exposing the crown to view. You will probably notice at least one very lively eye ready to shoot up next spring.

If tree peonies must be planted where there might be wind damage, it would be wise—at time of planting—to set a heavy stake into the planting hole, along with the roots, centering the stake as nearly as possible. As new stems develop and the plant becomes bushy, the stems may be individually tied to this stake, thereby minimizing the tendency to be whipped by the wind. For permanent results, use an

aluminum pipe for a stake. In any event, do not attempt to tie a stem that has not stopped growing and begun to harden.

If you live near oak trees, the chances are you have a squirrel population. They love to poke around in soft soil for places to bury their acorns and could too easily damage your plants unless you guard against them. I prefer to ring the bases of my plants with a thin wire netting (the hexagonal variety is unobtrusive), kept in place with a couple of small stakes. Six to 8 inches high is sufficient to give the squirrels your message. Other expedients might be: stopping the cultivation program from mid-summer on, to remove the attraction of loose soil; or covering the soil with a very coarse mulch.

## **TREE PEONY TOPICS**

*Louis Smirnow, Brookville, Long Island, N.Y.*

It is most pleasantly surprising to observe how tree peonies are becoming more useful to landscape architects. In former years, tree peonies were never used by the landscape architects but now more and more tree peonies are being used to help decorate lawns, plant in front of homes, among azaleas, rhododendrons, and other shrubs. They add to the beauty of the blooming items. While discussing this with at least twenty landscape architects, most of them want the tree peony. Many of the varieties used are **GODAISHU, HANAKISOI, TAMAFUYO, RENKAKU, YAE ZAKURA, YACHIYO TSUBAKI, TAIYO, HOWKI, HANADAIGIN, HATSU GARASHU** and **L'ESPERANCE**.

\* \* \* \*

It would be wise not to plant tree peonies where there is no protection from the wind as heavy and strong wind will break branches and hurt the plant around the stalk, and do serious damage to the root system beneath the ground level.

If you do not have protection of some kind, then my advice would be to place a wired screen around the plant, preventing the wind from reaching it.

\* \* \* \*

The best time to feed plants is about 3 to 4 weeks after blooming. If your tree peonies bloom around May 15th, feed them about June 11 to June 20th by digging a small trench about 2 inches from the stem, then place a full handful of food in the trench. Cover with soil, then water the area.

Never feed plants in the fall because that is the dormant period.

Super phosphate and 5-10-5 are excellent for feeding all peonies.

I suggest when planting a tree peony that you put in a handful of lime, mixing it with the soil.

# SEARCHING FOR FRAGRANT PEONIES

*Edward R. Rasmussen, Rte. 2, Box 156A, Omaha, NE 68134*

Over a period of time, I have been able to locate a few of the older peony varieties of particular fragrance, that I was searching for. Locating newer varieties of outstanding fragrance is, of course, not so difficult as long as growers make note of this quality in their descriptions of plants for sale. This they will hopefully always do as the scent, when admirable, is the crown on an already regal flower.

The Kuhls, of Sisson Peony Gardens, Rosendale, Wisconsin, were able to help me with a number of the older, fragrant varieties, as they carry an immense number of varieties—not throwing out all the older ones to make way for the new. Unfortunately, their farming interests conflict for time with the peony gardens and so the latter are up for sale. Let us hope and pray that they find a sympathetic buyer, or a great living resource for peony lovers may be lost.

Two varieties of particular fragrance which I have had no luck locating in the American trade are: Kelway's Rosemary—rose-pink blooms of a silvered appearance with the spicy perfume of rosemary; and Edith Cavell—free-flowering and early, its large creamy-yellow blooms being richly scented. I am not sure that these are particularly old varieties, but they certainly are uncommon. If anyone can help me with either of these varieties, I would certainly appreciate hearing from you.

## EDUCATIONAL SLIDES

### *EDUCATIONAL COLORED SLIDES*

*One hundred colored slides have been assembled showing the various stages of the growth of the herbaceous peony. The pictures begin with the eye of the peony emerging through the soil in early spring, continues with the handling of the bloom, cutting divisions and planting. Also seed pods and seeds to be harvested.*

*There are colored slides showing the full plant in bloom and individual flowers. In addition, floral arrangements of the peony flower. A tree peony is shown so as to compare roots and growth habit of the two kinds of peonies.*

*W. G. Sindt photographed the various stages of the peony through the year. Dr. Kent Crossley photographed the many varieties of peony plants in full bloom. Tree peony specimen from Christ Laning. Outline and assembly, Greta Kessenich.*

\* \* \* \*

For a very long time, I have been trying to find Peony LA FRANCE. It is tragic that we cannot find any of these older varieties. If you have LaFrance, I would like to hear from you.

Robert Wade Lewis

3179 Reifsnnyder Road R.D. 1, Gilbertsville, PA 19525

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# THE GOLDEN YEARS AND OLD PEONIES

*Rev. Joseph A. Syrový, Vining, Iowa*

I received the March issue of the Bulletin while I was writing this article. The words that greeted me on the front cover were "This is our 80th Year!" Mine too, I thought. We often read the words of the Psalmist, "Our span of life is seventy years or eighty if we are strong." During these years sometimes we are strong, but how often weak.

In my autumn years, it is good to reminisce so we shall go back to about thirty years when we arrived at this beautiful rolling countryside. They call it "The Bohemian Hills." We wanted more beauty, so we decided on some peonies. A nurseryman was going out of business and was selling peonies for one dollar a bushel. He dug up a clump and put it in a bushel basket. I bought three baskets. As I remember, one basket contained Mons. Jules Elie. I divided all of them and planted them in three different locations, on the grounds where they are still growing.

Some time later, I visited Brother Charles. I had never seen a Japanese tree peony before and I thought they were so beautiful. I bought at least one-half dozen which Bro. Charles selected for me. To name a few, SHINTENCHI, TAMA-FUYO and GESSAKAI. They are still growing for me and are my oldest. I added to my collection as the years rolled by.

In 1960, I received a catalog from Silvia Saunders entitled "Hybrid Peonies." I've never been sorry that I ordered some reds, like ALEXANDER WOOLCOTT, CARDINALS ROBE, the coral pinks, LAURA MAGNUSON, the rose ones like LUDOVICA. I added RED CHARM, of course, and FLAME and others. They are all beauties and a sight to behold. In her catalog were also listed the Lutea hybrids and so came another venture into yellow tree peonies. She also sent me seeds and clumps of Mloko x macro and others. I also had to have MLOKOSEWITSCHI and ORIENTAL GOLD.

Then Louis Smirnow came out with the new Itoh hybrids and I ordered YELLOW DREAM and YELLOW HEAVEN. Our hybridizers then began to create their own Itohs. Don Hollingsworth sent me pollen and instructions. However, I have not been able to create one. He then sent me two of his own. Along with the Itohs came the excitement of trying to develop an unfading yellow herbaceous peony. For encouragement along this line, we are grateful to Chris and Lois Laning, who gave support to Roy Pherson and sent his seed and their own as Roy's Best Yellow. We have many of blooming size already. We are thankful for their editing and publishing PAEONIA especially for hybridizers. We hope for our best yellow.

Who could resist the pretty catalog of David Reath? We had to have some of the Gratwick and Daphnis tree hybrids. We now have ARTEMIS, GAUGUIN and TRIA. TRIA is fascinating with its "three bright crisp yellow flowers on each strong stem" as he

describes it. Then comes the Wild's colorful picture book catalog and although we have plenty of peonies, we have to order another one!

Enough of this reminiscing and before we wake up from our nostalgia we must add that we look forward to our Bulletin and we thank our hard-working editor, Greta, whose midas touch turns it into gold, that young men may have visions and old men may have dreams.

## MY PEONY GARDEN

*Edna Watkins, Lubbock, Texas*

When we built our house in 1940 five blocks from the University, among my first plantings were *LeCygne* and *Richard Carvel*. After they were well established, they were a delight to us and students & neighbors. Later, we bought the 50 foot lot west of us and in 1953 (for our 17th wedding anniversary) we ordered a dozen peonies from Gilbert H. Wild & Son. They were: *Mons. Jules Elie*, *Hansina Brand*, *Nippon Beauty*, *Ama No Sode*, *Isani Gidui*, *Myrtle Gentry*, *Sarah Bernhardt*, *Festiva Maxima*, *Philippe Rivoire*, *Richard Carvel*, *LeCygne* and *Kelway's Glorious*. Some are still growing in the same place—others became too low and had to be moved.

At age 6 years, *Festiva Maxima* had 50 glorious blooms. All of the long established ones, bloom rather shyly now but make enough show to count.

Hybrids that have done well are: *Archangel*, *Requiem Red Charm* and *Cytheria*. Tree peonies: *High Noon* and *Vesuvian* are doing fairly well. I learned the hard way that all peonies need protection from the high dry winds we have here and tree peonies need light shade also.

Since becoming a member of the American Peony Society, I have ordered Estate peonies from Klehm Nursery. These grow especially well: *Bowl of Cream*, *Emma Klehm*, *Fairy's Petticoat*, *First Lady*, *Jay Cee*, *Pillow Talk*, *Pink Lemonade*, *Raspberry Sundae* and *Susie Q*.

Several garden club members have peony plantings but few other gardeners grow them. Horticulture students visit our garden and in May when our peonies, iris, poppies and roses are in bloom, camera buffs have a field day.

At Amarillo, TX (on old route 66), 120 miles north of here, Dr. Gist had an outstanding planting of peonies. After his death, his wife carried on for several years. Gilbert H. Wild & Son still list their pink peony named for her, *Jessie Gist*.

In Santa Fe and Albuquerque, New Mexico, I have seen fine peony plants.



**If you cut a tree, plant a tree.  
It is nature's replaceable energy.**

## BEGINNER SELECTIONS

*Ned Bayley, Silver Spring, Maryland*

In early June, 1980, Joyce and I were traveling south on Route 26 from Oshkosh, Wisconsin. We came to the small town of Rosendale and were surprised to find traffic bumper-to-bumper as we entered the city limits. Cars were parked on both sides of the highway.

"What's going on?" I asked Joyce.

Joyce looked around and then shouted, "Peonies! A whole field of them!"

As soon as I could find a place, I parked and we followed the line of people back to Sisson's gardens. A small gazebo graced the entry to row upon row of gorgeous blooms. We spent more than an hour looking at the different colors and types.

When we got back in the car, I said, "That's for me. When I retire next year, I'm going to raise peonies. We had them at home when I was a kid and they've always been my favorite flower. Besides, they're easy to grow."

The next spring, we visited the nearby collection at the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. Being novices, we were amazed and excited by the range of types and colors. We made a list of the varieties that impressed us and Joyce photographed those we thought were extra special. Her first set of pictures included the Japanese Bu-Te and Hari-Ai-Nun. Among the hybrids, we picked the brilliant Flame, the dark Burma Ruby and Carol. We liked several of the doubles, including Bowl of Cream, Richard Carvel and Lowell Thomas. A week later, we returned and added to our list of extra specials. This time we included the white, creamy Rapture, Toro-No-Maki, Minuet, Pink Lemonade, Barrington Belle, Flamingo, Adolph Rousseau and others.

The Arboretum collection was established in 1956. Many of the donors, such as Wassenberg Gardens, who would have been sources of divisions, had gone out of business. However, Lynn Batdorf, the curator, was very helpful in locating other sources.

The second year, we made our initial selections from the peonies we saw in the Royal Botanical Gardens at Hamilton, Ontario. We also took note of the impressive varieties that were winning at the National Show. Our extra specials included Fairies Petticoat, Jean F. Bockstoce, June Rose, Salmon Glow, Red Grace, Bonanza, Diana Parks, Rose Queen, Rose Heart, Lovely Rose, Norma Volz, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Princess Margaret, Kansas, Gardenia, Sylver, Coral Charm and James Pillow.

We have been able to obtain roots of all our extra specials except two. Despite Greta Kessenich's efforts, we still haven't been able to obtain Flamingo and Margaret Clark. Frank Howell of Newton, New Jersey, was generous in sending a division from Adolph Rousseau, and Dr. Henry Landis of Willowdale, Ontario, sent us two of the Bockstoce



varieties that are not readily available.

We also made selections from catalogs. Our criteria have been color and blooming time. We have not advanced to the point where we consider plant growth characteristics, but I'm sure we'll pay attention to strength and form in the future. We have nearly seventy varieties started and we'll get some experience with these before we add too many more—that is—if we can restrain ourselves when we see something extra special.

## HYBRIDS

*Clarence Lienau, Lienau Peony Gardens, Detroit, Michigan*

*Bulletin #195*

These fine new kinds of peonies have added zest to the peony world. The colors are very exciting. Every gardener who grows peonies should try at least two or three of these new wonders. Here is a list of those I consider very fine. **Red Charm**, in my opinion, is the finest of all. A strong grower and free bloomer; bomb-double type, with a fine form and very unusual red color. It's a good keeper as well.

**Ludovica** (semi-double coral pink). **Moonrise** (single erect pale ivory). **Lovely Rose** (fine single creamy pink). **Diana Parks** (unusual orange-red). **Sophie** (fine cerise pink). **Red Red Rose** (glistening dark red semi-double). **Cytharea** (very fine coral pink, much in demand). **Prairie Moon** (semi-double pale ivory). **Walter Mains** (the finest dark red-and-gold Jap type hybrid. Strong grower and a good bloomer. Very large fine staminodes). **Carolina** (large single pale pink). **Athena** (early large cream single, flared deep pink). **Carina** (fine pure brilliant red single). **Lois Arleen** (semi-double unusual light red; strong grower).

You may find some of these a bit hard to locate, and some a little costly, but when you consider that peonies last for many years, I feel they are well worth the price.

In ending, let me add some **DON'TS** for peony growers. These are very important. **DON'T** plant in low ground or where soil appears to stay damp or soggy at any time or in any season. Drainage is most important.

**DON'T** over-fertilize: 3 good handfuls of bonemeal mixed in your soil is sufficient for three years.

**DON'T** cut down foliage right after blooming time, but wait till fall. Then cut it to the ground and be sure to throw it well away. (Not on a compost heap).

**DON'T** cut blooms for the first two years.

**DON'T** cut more than two-thirds of the blooms on any one plant. When cutting blooms, leave two leaves on the bottom of each stalk remaining.

**DON'T** plant in light, sandy, soil.

**DON'T** plant close to large trees or shrubs which will take the

nutriment from your peonies.

**DO:** Water young plants when necessary; give each plant 3-4 gallons of water, and cultivate again after the soil has dried out.

**DO:** If you wish the main bloom to be large, do dis-bud all side buds.

**DO:** cut off faded blooms and trim plants into nice-looking bushes when the blooming season is ended. (Of course if you are saving seed, leave the old blooms on the plant).

**DO:** mulch the first three winters.

**FINALLY:** Proper soil, good drainage, disbudding, and most of all frequent cultivation, and you should surely be a most successful grower of peonies. It's as easy as that.

## **DIVIDING PEONIES** *Myron D. Bigger, Topeka, Kansas*

First, do your peonies need dividing? If you want bloom and do not need any more plants, leave them alone unless the bloom is scarce or smaller than they should be. It may be that all they need is a little cultivation or a little fertilizer. (Not much; remember I said **LITTLE**.)

Should you want more of a variety, you can divide a three-year-old peony and do very well. After a plant is ten years old, you do not gain very much per year. You get about so much and very little more.

When you do divide, make up your mind as to whether you want the most planting divisions you can get, or do you want flowers quickly?

For rapid multiplication, cut so that you will have one or two eye divisions on a straight root or two. With these small divisions, beautiful plants will grow, and you will have **NEW** plants.

For quick blooms, cut so that you will have one-to-five eye divisions with several roots. This will be a well balanced division. Plant them in an upright position while the one eye plant should be planted flat. Planting flat is easier and they will not heave out during the first winter.

The first time I divided **SHAWNEE CHIEF**, I planted eighteen new plants. All the divisions were nice one or two-eyed roots. Most other varieties will not increase that much. If a variety makes large club roots, it can be split in two or four pieces and they will grow very well, just as long as each piece has an eye or two.

In dividing peonies, the roots need not be more than four or five inches long. Any longer, the roots have a tendency to branch out at the end instead of the crown where you get multiplication.

When a peony is dug, be sure to wash the plant very good before you start to divide, so you can see where to cut, otherwise you might end up with all eyes on one piece and all roots on the other.

A peony plant that is more than three or four years old, should never be reset. It should always be divided. You will have a much better plant as a final result.

— 16 —

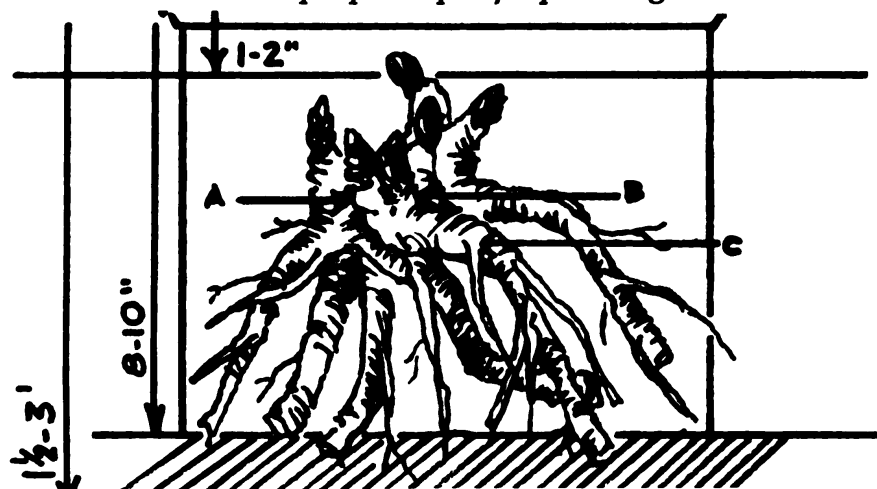
It is a good idea to divide your plants and let them dry long enough for the cuts to heal. This way there is less chance of disease entering the new cuts.

The spring after I sent Mr. Brand his first plant of KANSAS, I visited his place. He said, "Let's go out and see how your KANSAS is growing."

When we found it, there were three plants. Mr. Brand turned to me and said: "How do you account for that?" The fact is, he had made three good planters out of the one big 2-5 eye plant I sent him, and they all grew.

**PEONY PLANTING TO START IN THE EARLY FALL  
— ENDING WITH GROUND FREEZE UP FOR THE WINTER.**

*This illustration indicates proper depth for planting herbaceous Peonies.*



*Fertilized area of good top garden soil, compost and some commercial fertilizer.*

Peonies are easily grown, with a little care you will be rewarded for your efforts, Peonies may be planted anytime when the ground is not frozen from September through May, if plants are dormant.

1. Select a sunny, well drained place for your Peonies; they will tolerate some shade, but should have sun half the day. Do not plant too close to large trees or shrubs that will rob them of moisture and food.

2. Dig a hole 12 inches across and 12 or more inches deep, and place Peony root in the hole with top of the eyes (sprouts) pointing up, eyes not over 2 inches below soil level after the soil has been firmed.

3. Fill with loose soil to level and thoroughly water. If planted in the Fall or Winter, mulch with grass clippings, straw or peat about 4 inches deep. Fertilize Peonies with your favorite bulb fertilizer just as the foliage begins to unfurl. Many successful peony fanciers wait until after a hard freeze before cutting off the foliage. As Peony tops turn brown in the late summer, they may be cut off level with the ground and burned. This prevents the carryover of any foliage disease, if present, to the next season.

## OBITUARY

*Reno Rosefield was a son of John Rosenfield. The name Rosenfield was changed to Rosefield in 1923 so it would conform to the Swedish spelling "Rosefald."*

*John Rosenfield was a Charter Member of the American Peony Society. See Page 205 - (Rosefield) 75 Year book*

### RENO ROSEFIELD

Reno Arnold Rosefield, a horticulturist who operated a nursery in Tigard, died in a Portland hospital Thursday. He was 99.

Mr. Rosefield, who lived in Portland, was born in West Point, Neb., and was admitted to the Nebraska bar after graduating from law school as a young man. He played violin in a symphony in Nebraska and established a nursery in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1923.

In 1938, Mr. Rosefield moved his nursery to Tigard near the intersection of Southwest Pacific Highway and Durham Road.

He was a 32nd-degree Mason and had been a Mason for more than 50 years. He was a member of the Waveland Park Masons Lodge 654.

Survivors include his wife, Rena; a daughter, Camilla Fraser of Portland; sons, John and Robert, both of Lincoln City; a brother, Karl of San Francisco; stepsons, Elgin Forsyth and Clifford Forsyth, both of British Columbia; stepdaughters, Irene Neuzil of Portland and June Weiss of Junction City; 10 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

### Haidee E. Wild Sarcoxie, Missouri

Mrs. Wild was born Nov. 11, 1900, at Pierce City, and died April 8, 1983. She had been a lifetime resident of the Sarcoxie area. She was a former school teacher, having taught at Banner and Union Schools in rural Sarcoxie. She was a member of the Presbyterian Church, where she was an elder and a deacon and a member of the Missionary Society and an honorary member of United Presbyterian Women's Association since 1979. She also was a member of the Progress Club and Chapter FZ of PEO Sisterhood, Sarcoxie. She was a shareholder in Gilbert H. Wild and Son, Inc., Sarcoxie.

She married Allen J. Wild on Jan. 17, 1925, at Sarcoxie. He survives.

Other survivors include a son, James H. Wild, of the home, and a daughter, Shirley Gene Wild, of the home.

# TISSUE CULTURE OF HERBACEOUS PEONIES

*George W. Radtke, W 176 N 12452 Hwy. 145, Germantown, WI 53022*

Herbaceous peonies are usually propagated by 3-5 eye divisions of stock plants. A grower may be able to double his stock every three years by planting in a three-year rotation.<sup>4</sup> Peony breeders face many problems in introducing new varieties because the multiplication rate is very low. By doubling the growing points every year, 10-12 years are required to produce 10,000 plants from a single selection.<sup>1</sup> The low rate of increase is the main reason that peonies are so expensive for the consumer.

Mass propagation of peonies by tissue culture would allow breeders to introduce new varieties much sooner and would provide a greater variety of cultivars for the home gardener. Meyer<sup>2</sup> has attempted to produce plantlets by callus culture. Underground tissue showed browning and excessive contamination. Flower buds were callused, but have not produced plantlets after several years in culture. Anther culture<sup>5</sup> and pollen culture<sup>3</sup> have also been plagued by browning of the tissue. Pollen culture has been used to successfully produce plantlets by using liquid culture and frequent changes of the medium. In my experiments on solid media, excessive browning was the main factor in preventing formation of plantlets from all parts of the peony plant.

## Materials and Methods

**Experiment 1:** Dormant vegetative buds of *Peonia lactiflora* cv. Frankie Curtiss were surface sterilized for 20 min. in 0.5% sodium hypochlorite solution with a few drops of surfactant. They were rinsed three times in sterile deionized distilled water and 2-3 mm slices were inserted and placed on Murashige and Skoog salts with 100 mg/L myo-inositol, 160 mg/L adenine sulfate, sucrose (3.0%), 2.5 mg/L naphthalene acetic acid (NAA), and 5.0 mg/L 6-( $\gamma$ ,  $\gamma$ -dimethylallylamino)-purine (2iP). (Peony medium). pH was adjusted to 5.6 with 1N KOH. Difco Bacto Agar (0.7%) was added to the medium, dissolved by heating, and 25 ml was poured into 25 X 150 mm test tubes and capped. The tubes were autoclaved for 15 min. at 121°C at 1.3 kg/cm<sup>2</sup> (18 psi). The cultured tubes were placed in total darkness at 25°C or under Cool-White fluorescent light (160 uE m<sup>-2</sup> sec<sup>-1</sup>) for 16 hrs. per day at room temperature. The objective of this experiment was callus production.

**Experiment 2:** Flower buds, pedicels, petioles, and stem cross sections of variety 'Frankie Curtiss' were incubated on Peony medium as Exp. 1. Half of the tubes contained 2g/L activated charcoal to tie up phenolic compounds. The cultured tubes were placed in darkness or light as above in a 2 X 2 factorial combination. The objectives of this experiment were to test tissues for callus production, and to determine the effects of activated charcoal on the detrimental effects of the phenolic compounds.

**Experiment 3:** Shannon and Kamp reported the presence of an axillary bud at the base of each leaf. Peonies also have a bud at the base of each bud scale of the "eyes." These axillary buds are a potential source of meristematic tissue. Apical meristems are not produced often by mature peonies because they emerge from the eye with a flower bud primordium. 'Frankie Curtiss' axillary buds from leaf axils and from eyes were excised from surface sterilized stems and cultured on Murashige's Shoot Multiplication Medium "A." This is an MS medium containing 80 mg/L adenine sulfate, 170 mg/L sodium phosphate monobasic, 0.3 mg/L indole-3-acetic acid (IAA), and 30 mg/L 2iP. A 2 X 2 factorial combination of light and charcoal treatments was set up as Exp. 2. The objective of this experiment was shoot proliferation and to determine the effects of activated charcoal on growth regulator action and phenolic compounds.

**Experiment 4:** Flower buds and pedicels of 'Felix Crousse' were cultured on Pichloram medium. This medium is the same as Peony medium except that NAA was replaced with 1.0 mg/L Pichloram. A 2 X 2 factorial of light and charcoal treatments was used as above. The objective of this experiment was callus and embryo formation.

**Experiment 5:** Axillary buds from 'Felix Crousse' eyes were cultured on Murashige's Shoot Multiplication medium "A" in a 2 X 2 factorial as previously. The objective was to study the effects of the activated charcoal on growth regulator action, especially IAA, and its effect on phenolic compounds. Shoot proliferation was also an objective of this experiment.

**Experiment 6:** Stem slices of 'Frankie Curtiss' were soaked in either 150 mg/L citric acid, 100 mg/L ascorbic acid, a 1:1 (v/v) solution of both, or sterile deionized distilled water. All solutions were autoclaved for 15 min. prior to the 30 min. soaking period. The purpose of the treatments was to prevent phenolic production and compare the treatments for effectiveness. The stem slices were inverted and placed on Peony medium with no activated charcoal. The objective of the experiment was callus production.

Paper chromatography was used to determine if the black exudate produced by the tissue was actually phenolics. The solvent was prepared using 6 parts butanol, 4 parts pyridine, 3 parts water. Samples were placed on a line drawn at the base of the chromatography paper and the bottom of the paper was placed in the solvent. The paper was removed and dried after 30 min. incubation.

**Experiment 7:** Axillary buds from eyes of various crosses supplied by Don Hollingsworth were cultured on modified Murashige's Shoot Multiplication Medium "A" containing 15 mg/L 2iP instead of 30 mg/L. Included were several early herbaceous hybrids, a colchicine treated *P. lactiflora*, a *P. lactiflora* X (*P. tenuifolia* X *P. peregrina*), and cv. Westerner (*P. lactiflora*) X cv. Good Cheer (*P. officinalis* X *P. peregrina*). Buds were excised from material kept in cold storage. The



material had been shipped in from Kansas City, Mo. and had elongated somewhat before shipment. The eyes had broken dormancy and this made the buds at the base of the scales easy to excise. The tissue was surface sterilized in 0.5% sodium hypochlorite for 10 min. or 20 min. to see if there was any difference in damage to the soft tissue. A 2 X 2 factorial of light and charcoal treatments was set up. The objective of this experiment was to determine if the reduced 2iP level would increase the elongation of the meristems and cause shoot proliferation.

**Experiment 8:** Axillary buds from the eyes of cvs. Lake O' Silver and Frankie Curtiss were cultured on modified Murashige's Shoot Multiplication Medium "A" after surface sterilization for 20 min. in 0.5% sodium hypochlorite solution. A 2 X 2 factorial combination of light and charcoal treatments was set up. The primary objective of this experiment was shoot proliferation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Experiment 1:** The contamination rate in this experiment was very high because underground tissue was used as the explant source. One bud slice was clean, and it formed green callus within 2 weeks. The tissue was transferred several times but eventually turned brown and died.

**Experiment 2:** All stem tissue on medium without activated charcoal exuded a black substance into the medium which was evident within 1-2 days. Flower buds which had the receptacle removed showed significantly less exudate than those which had the receptacle attached. Despite transfer every 2 weeks, the explants on medium without activated charcoal turned brown and eventually died. Those plants on charcoal looked healthy, producing green callus in the light. However, after three weeks in culture, the callus suddenly turned brown and the tissue died. Flower buds showed curling due to auxin elongation. Most of the flower buds had the receptacle attached, and therefore declined. Those that survived produced small amounts of colorless callus in the dark. The buds were quite large when they were put into culture, and all brown tissue was removed in subculturing, but very little callus was produced. This may have been due to the large size of the buds, some of which were 3/4 of an inch across, which is much larger than those used by Meyer.<sup>2</sup> It became obvious from this experiment that more frequent subculturing was necessary.

**Experiment 3:** The axillary buds from the leaf axils are minute. These buds died rather quickly due to the black substance that they exuded. Rather than excising these buds, it may be possible to elongate them while they are still on the stem by application of gibberellic acid to the leaf axil. They may serve as a source of meristematic tissue in this manner, although I know of no documentation that GA could break the dormancy of these buds.

The buds from the axils of the bud scales are the source of growth the year after flowering. These buds elongated in culture and minute

leaf structures became evident after 2 weeks in culture. The black exudate overcame some of these buds, but a few showed growth. One bud in the dark on medium with no charcoal initiated callus and produced a leaf-like structure after one month in culture. This response occurred only on media without activated charcoal, which may be interpreted as a tying up of IAA by the activated charcoal.

**Experiment 4:** The Pichloram medium produced callus more readily than the Peony medium. However, despite more frequent transfers, the tissue eventually died due to the phenolic compounds. Activated charcoal delayed this effect, but eventually all the tissue turned brown. Flower buds grudgingly formed a bit of callus in the dark but subculturing did not prevent eventual decline.

**Experiment 5:** This experiment was basically a repeat of Exp. 3 using buds from the bud scale axils only. Most of the buds were overrun by phenolics, but some of the larger buds showed growth, forming small leaves in the light. Dark conditions favored callus production, probably because IAA was not broken down by light. As in Exp. 3, one bud on medium without activated charcoal formed callus and a leaf-like structure after one month in the dark. I concluded that the cytokinin level was inhibiting elongation of the buds, and reduced the level of 2iP for the next bud culture.

**Experiment 6:** I had hoped that the citric and ascorbic acid treatments would prevent or reduce the phenolic production. Treatments were ineffective, and the black exudate was visible by the day after culturing. The ascorbic acid treatment caused a slightly denser mass of the exudate to be produced. The treatment with citric and ascorbic acids had an inner ring of the denser exudate as well as another ring around it of the less dense exudate.

Paper chromatography showed that the exudate probably is a phenolic compound. Fluorescent "halos" were evident from each sample when held over UV light, which is the positive response.

A sample of the tissue was taken to plant pathology, where microscopic study revealed the presence of bacteria in the exudate. Evidently, this bacteria is present in the tissue of peonies most of the time. During normal growth conditions there seems to be no real problem with this bacteria. However, in culture the bacteria may be the reason that the phenolic compounds are produced. The phenolics may be a plant response to inhibit the growth of these bacteria when they move into tissue that has been wounded by cutting or bruising.

**Experiment 7:** The reduced cytokinin level had a very positive effect on the elongation of the buds in culture. The colchicine treated variety had very large buds, several of which unfolded leaves within one week. There were distinct morphological differences between the buds from the various crosses. Larger buds were at an advantage because they did not die from the phenolics as quickly as the smaller buds. Some of the varieties also seemed more resistant than others and callused readily in the dark. Although most of the buds eventually died, one bud of the 'Westerner' X 'Good Cheer' cross formed an

adventitious shoot from callus after three months in culture. This cross showed signs of the bacteria, namely some phenolic production, but seemed resistant. The bud was incubated in the dark on medium with no activated charcoal.

**Experiment 8:** The 'Lake O' Silver' had small buds which were overrun by phenolics after a few weeks in culture. 'Frankie Curtiss' showed growth after a week in culture, but these buds eventually died from the phenolic compounds that they produced.

### CONCLUSIONS

The main obstacle to the successful tissue culture of peonies is the phenolic compounds which inhibit growth. These compounds may be produced in response to the internal bacteria, or they may be a wounding response of peony tissue. Conclusive evidence and characterization of the bacteria would be a positive step toward successful tissue culture. I feel that this could be done by incubation of surface sterilized stem tissue or cultured callus on standard nutrient broth solution. Bacterial cells could be plated onto various media to characterize them, and possible methods for control could be established. It is possible that antibiotics could be incorporated into the tissue culture medium to control the bacteria.

Another approach to the problem would be meristem culture of heat treated explants. Apical meristems may be derived by GA treatment of the dormant vegetative buds. The bacteria seems to have little advantage in the intact plant, so producing active meristems on the plant would seem more promising than trying to activate the meristems in culture. Also, the buds in the leaf axils may be a source of meristems if they can be induced to break dormancy. Early attempts to break these buds were unsuccessful<sup>4</sup>; GA and auxins were not tried.

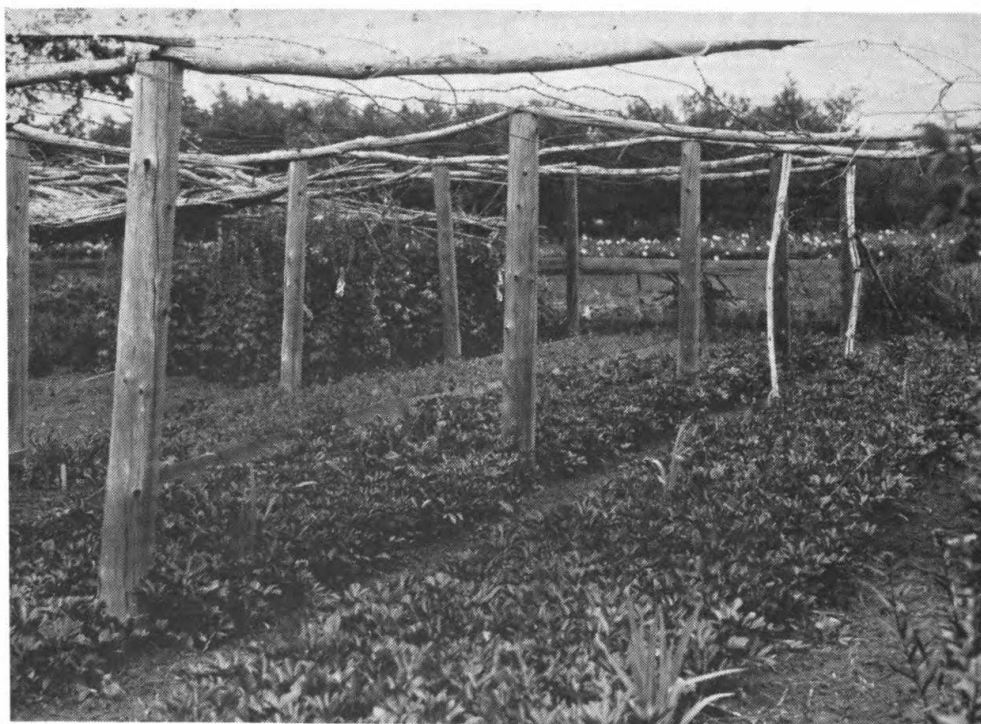
I feel that continued research in this area is needed and that eventually success will be achieved. I would like to thank the American Peony Society for their cooperation and Don Hollingsworth for supplying plant material.

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*Mr. A. M. Brand*





### **PICTURES AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY R. W. TISCHLER, FARIBAULT, MINNESOTA.**

From the quarts and quarts of peony seeds planted by Mr. Brand, in these seedling beds grew thousands and thousands of seedlings. Many were selected and grown for many more years before a final evaluation was made. Of those named, many are still among the best peonies grown today, namely: **Blanche King, David Harum, Dr. John L. Crenshaw, Dr. L. W. Pollock, Ella Christiansen; Francis Willard, Hansina Brand, Henry St. Clair, Jean Cooperman, Krinkled White; Lora Dexheimer, Longfellow, Martha Bulloch, Mary Brand, Mrs. A. M. Brand, Mrs. Frank Beach; Myrtle Gentry, Pres. Lincoln; Prairie Afire and Ruth Elizabeth.**

Many other varieties are still on today's market, but not as well known—while many have been discarded. Over one hundred peony varieties were named by Brands.



***P. californica*, Las Pilatas Nursery 1982**



*Las Pilatas Nursery sells P. californica roots. My original plants came from this nursery; also first advice on how to grow these seedlings.*

*Betty M. Halas*



# A SHORT NOTE ON PAEONIA CALIFORNICA

By Betty M. Halas, B.S. & M.S.-B.S.

This is one of the two native North American peonies, that has for one reason or another always been neglected by plant breeders. The easiest source of comparison is to consider it similar to that of a tomato plant, since the flowers are almost fruit-like and resemble a goldfish bowl in appearance in that they do not fully open but remain more like a ball type structure. Not to mislead the reader, the flowers are not orange but are a very dark maroon to deep red. The flowers are about one inch in diameter for the ball, but if it were unfolded it would easily be about three inches flat. The sepals are green and only slightly shorter than the petals, sometimes the sepals give the illusion of the flower being darker than it actually is. A good portion of the red color is actually masked by the green sepals which cling rather closely to the petals. There is a two-tone effect of green and red. However, green and red are not necessarily the best two-tone combination. The flowers are nodding, much like *Alice Harding* in the tree peonies. There appears to be a single flower per stem, and this would provide the possibility that selective breeding could increase the flower size in time. The most attractive feature of the plant is that it has a very attractive habit in a mature plant of several years growth.

The best plant to compare it to that we are more familiar with is *tenuifolia*. They are both the same height approximately. The difference in flowering is that *tenuifolia* opens up into a cup and gets to be about three inches in diameter, while *californica* never opens up that much, but resembles a sherry goblet. In color, *tenuifolia* is a bright blood red with a contrast of bright yellow stamens while *californica* is far more conservative in outward appearance and could be more tulip-like in the early stages in the combination of green, dark red and black overtones. While *tenuifolia* has a fern-like leaf structure, this structure is also a handicap for the plant as well since the surface area does not have the food manufacturing capacity that would develop this into a large bushy plant. In fact, those *tenuifolia* plants have never been bushy, but rather more poppy-like in plant habit except for the leaf structure. Of the two, *californica* has the superior plant habit. However, while the leaves of *californica* are also finely divided, they are of a larger surface area and favor the development of more robust roots. While *tenuifolia* will endure cold weather and clay hard soils and will tolerate a wet foot structure, *Paeonia californica* will not. The lower limit for *P. californica* appears to be 15 degrees Fahrenheit, and it is a true member of the crowfoot family in that it definitely doesn't like wet feet. It prefers a sandy, fast-draining soil that is almost without nutrient value. In fact, *californica* has a vigorous appetite in that it will grow at a tremendous rate, when it decides to grow, on a very poor soil fare. It would appear that a good soil will provide the symptoms of fertilizer burn. It appears to be a desert style plant

adapted for survival in an arid area with very little rainfall. Even the flower structure appears adapted for retaining moisture in the incurved goblet and resist evaporation of a hot noonday sun. The nodding flowers don't want to face the drying of the sun's rays but rather appear as if to have an afternoon siesta rather than compete with the sun for energy or moisture. Since the plant is designed for retaining moisture in a difficult location, it cannot survive where the soil will retain the moisture as in clay structures, or where there is regular rain accumulation.

This rather normal situation causes the plant to drown mostly, and to develop root rot and serious fungus diseases. This plant must have a lengthy summer drought period to reorganize for its next growth period. Apparently, during the drought period, the plant slowly develops the growth hormones and other natural plant products that will, like insulin within the human body, enable it to extract the most nutrient from a limited soil structure with almost nothing apparent there for the plants we normally know of. However, since the Peony is adapted for one sudden growth surge in a limited desert season, it just doesn't have enough for a longer season, and, in fact, cannot physically respond to stimulation for another growth season until its resources are once again ready for it. This adaptation has taken place over countless centuries; who are we to expect a sudden transformation?

It isn't fair to compare *californica* to a developed peony, since it has never been crossed with any other peony that we know of. I can't compare *californica* with *Paeonia Brownii*, because I have never seen a plant of *Brownii*, but have to refer to it from hearsay only. I have heard that *Brownii* is a smaller plant than *californica*, with flowers slightly different and more sparse—that the cold weather tolerance of *Brownii* is much improved, but that it has two dormant seasons in a year—also, that where *californica* will tolerate a very poor sandy soil, *Brownii* will go one step better and tolerate a soil that is rocky and cold or freezing over much of the year, high in the mountains. It may tolerate more moisture than *californica*, depending upon which side of the mountain it likes to grow. But information is very sparse on this peony; it is exceedingly difficult to obtain seeds of the plant, and the plant itself is rarely offered for sale. Probably because the culture of the plant is largely unknown and after a few attempts to grow, it ends up in failure, and the demand for the plant diminishes entirely.

My best guess is that *Paeonia californica* can be crossed with *P. tenuifolia* and that probably will be more successful with *P. tenuifolia* as the pod parent. Because of the difference in growing seasons, it will be difficult to have *californica* as the pod parent. The cross would likely be an improvement over both plants and share the best qualities of both plants.

To close this brief article, the best recommendations for cultiva-

tion of *Paeonia californica* is that:

- (1) It needs good to perfect drainage.
- (2) It needs low organic soil (such as loam gravel).
- (3) It needs summer dormancy (summer drought).
- (4) It may need winter protection in some areas (15 deg. F.).
- (5) To keep summer rains from the plant, it could be on the south side of a house with overhead protection to keep summer rains off of it.
- (6) Perlite or volcanic pumice to about 20% of mix might help.

To summarize, this is an attractive plant that I consider beautiful in a well developed bush. The flowers can be developed further by crossing with other species, possibly *tenuifolia*. While the plant has been developed only by many centuries of nature, it would be interesting to see how the chromosomes of this plant would interpret those of other species into a new hybrid. This is a bit like playing a lottery, in that the breeding combinations may come up with a jackpot of a new genetic interpretation of plant habit, flower and color that may excite us tremendously and even have better moisture and cold resistance perhaps . . . ? In any event, it will still be a long time before we see a hybrid of this form.

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*LaRea D. Johnston of Herbarium, Dept. of Botany, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon.*  
*Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, Claremont, California.*  
*Dick Tilforth, Horticulturist.*  
*Las Pilatas Nursery, Route 23X, Santa Margarita, California.*

## PEONY SEED, Please

Again we ask that you save your herbaceous and tree peony seed. Label the name of the variety and send to Chris Laning: 553 West F. Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007. Through him, your seeds are distributed free to anyone that requests them. (\$1.50 is asked for postage and packing.)

The Society expresses deep gratitude to you, Chris, for your personal interest and time given, in filling these requests. Also, special thanks to all that participate in making this program possible by saving your seed and keeping the seed pool supplied.



**MINNESOTA PEONY SOCIETY EXHIBITION June 11-12. Har Mar Mall, 2100 North Snelling, Roseville, Minnesota.**



*Photo — Chris Laning*

The picture of *P. californica* was taken in early spring, late in March or early April. The area was Bogart Park, near Cherry Valley, which is near Beaumont, CA, about thirty miles west of Palm Springs. (Cherry Valley is about ten miles north of Beaumont.)

Widely scattered clumps of *P. californica* were growing in the wild beneath and among the chaparral and scrub bushes. The elevation was (and still is) such that the cold of winter along with snow afforded an adequate dormant period to invigorate these husky plants.

The soil properties varied widely within a relatively small area; gravelly, yellowish clay and sand mixture, rocky, almost barren, and some good soil, all seemed satisfactory for their requirements. One could very easily conclude that *P. californica* is not very demanding! But don't you believe it!! When transplanted elsewhere, they pine away in short order.

*P. californica* owns (possesses) a number of unique characteristics which are of great interest to the hybridizer, or at least to me. But I think it is a loner and antisocial.

—Paeonia Editor, Chris Laning, 553 West F. Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49007

*Ben Kerns was a very knowledgeable peony grower in Topeka, Kansas. He sold me many fine peonies and we traded back and forth for a long time. He did a lot to convince me that one- and -two eye roots were a valuable way to increase stock.*

*He was a clerk in the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co. I bought life insurance from him in 1928.*

*Ben Kerns died April 17, 1955 at the age of 68.*

—Myron D. Bigger

(Mr. Kerns wrote this article and sent it to Mr. Brand).

Submitted by R. W. Tischler

## THE “BURBANK” OF THE PEONY WORLD

by Ben Kerns — no date on old manuscript

*(Kansas boasts of their wheat and white-faced cattle, those who reside in Wisconsin point with pride to their production of superlatively fine cheeses, but Minnesotans, with justification, may lay claim to the world's two foremost originators of fine peonies, namely: A. M. BRAND and A. B. FRANKLIN.)*

Peony growing as a hobby is very apt to prove contagious. One has to be exposed. It is not reasonable to presume that a peony enthusiast shall be suddenly born if one's flower-loving tendencies have been directed solely to roses, dahlias, glads and phlox. He has to see some lovely peonies and, being so exposed, if he has the usual propensities of the true flower lover, it is my guess he shall, upon viewing their loveliness and beauty, color and form, delightful fragrance and gigantic size, immediately make a resolution to re-direct some of that pent-up enthusiasm he has held for other flowers. In fact, he is apt to even go a little further, perhaps forsake them entirely, since the peony grower finds that, in comparison to roses, glads, dahlias, success with the peony requires much less work, and its dependable blooming qualities, combined with the fact that it is almost wholly free from insect pests and infectious diseases, does very much to establish its desirability in the eyes of all flower lovers.

Roses must be frequently and properly sprayed and well fertilized to produce their loveliest and best typical blooms. Peonies need no spraying whatever, and, while fertilizer rightly applied is beneficial, yet the peony can be counted on to produce magnificent bloom either with or without fertilizer.

Dahlias, glads and many other bulbs and roots must be dug each fall and properly stored, then carried through the winter, to be again planted in spring and, if proper records are kept and one plants them extensively, this entails much work.

On the other hand, the peony once planted, will defy all that the elements have to offer (save a killing frost) and emerge victoriously each spring with gigantic flowers of beauty in color, fragrance, and

form that seldom fails to captivate the heart and mind in its quest of real soul-satisfying beauty.

Just as Kansas boasts of its wheat and white-faced cattle, just as Wisconsin points with pride to her production of superlatively fine cheeses, so also with justification, may Minnesotans lay claim to the two foremost originators of fine peonies, namely, A. M. BRAND and A. B. FRANKLIN, who, in my opinion, have contributed more to the introduction of new peonies of the highest degree of merit than any other two contemporary originators in the peony world.

This article, therefore, has as its aim to touch upon not only the most wonderful of all flowers and all hobbies, but as well the work and life of one who I believe is the leader in awakening mankind to the great beauty of the peony. That man is the honorable A. M. Brand of Faribault, Minnesota, known wherever fine peonies are talked or written about, or exhibited at your local or national peony shows.

Those who are only mildly interested in flowers and horticulture, perhaps on a chance invitation to attend a local or national peony show, or visit some lovely outstanding peony garden, often become such ardent and enthusiastic peony fans that they jot down names of scores of varieties at the show, make inquiries of exhibitors as to where such varieties may be purchased, write for catalogues by the dozen, join the American Peony Society, and often spend hundreds of dollars for roots of lovely and outstanding varieties.

But whoever attends a National Peony Show leaves there with one outstanding name in mind, namely, the name of Brand, because of the vast number of ribbon winners which were originated by him. They begin buying and planting peonies by many originators, but if in their selection they have had wise and friendly counsel in "what to plant," they begin to recognize one great truth in the peony field at least, that, in the name of Brand, we find the recognized "Burbank" of the peonyworld.

This, however, in no measure, is intended to detract from the universal recognition of other great originators, much of whose work and life have been devoted to the origination of fine peonies, and whose splendid contribution to that field is chronicled wherever and whenever fine peonies are written about: namely, Franklin, Sass, Shaylor, Neeley, Nichols, Saunders, Auten, Vories, and many others.

If it may be said, therefore, that, horticulturally at least, any one man has put the City of Faribault, Minnesota on the map, that man is Mr. Brand, who still conducts a peony and nursery business there that had its inception in 1868 - 82 years ago when his father first established a nursery business.

Born in the environs of growing things and stimulated by their beauty, it can therefore be easily understood how Mr. Brand, even in boyhood, would carry in his inmost thoughts the delights and joys of seeing growing things bear fruits and flowers, and convey their color



and beauty to admiring eyes.

It was in the year 1872 that the first planting of peonies were made on the Brand Nursery grounds. From that time on, a deep-seated conviction began to take form in his mind from year-to-year that he should play a vital part in introducing new peonies to the commercial world.

From his first beginnings, local recognition grew into state-wide recognition, and, with the passing years, that grew to national recognition of the aims, hopes and accomplishments of a truly great man in the peony world whose ribbons and medals taken at national, state, and local shows, if stretched end to end, would excite the admiration, wonder, and envy of every peony enthusiast.

The result has been that, in the closing days of May and early days of June each year not only vacation tourists but visitors both old and new, by train and by automobile, begin to converge on Faribault where they soon find their way to the Brand Peony Farms. Here a show room is maintained and, as the great blooms are at their best they are brought to the show room for display, where enthusiastic visitors are ever accorded a welcome and where they may bask in the joy and ecstasy, the delight and beauty, which Brand peonies bring to the mind, heart and soul of man.

In June, the whole setting around the home and office of the Brand peony Farm stretches out into a vast expanse of color and beauty. Though Mr. Brand's peony holdings comprise approximately fifty acres, yet his peony plantings are by no means the sum total of his horticultural endeavors and accomplishments.

The sweet odors and loveliness in color of "own root" French lilacs—in which Mr. Brand has long specialized—attract every eye and permeate the ambient atmosphere to leave an indelible impression upon the memory of every visitor.

In addition to peonies and lilacs, flowering crabs and miscellaneous flowering shrubs are grown in abundance and, likewise, play their part in making Brands' a June beauty spot that shall long endure in memory.

Also grown are the loveliest and best in irises of great merit. There the visitor finds not only delight and joy in the aforementioned, but as well are grown miscellaneous perennials, flowering shrubs, and, to the visitor, the gentle breezes also waft the sweet odors of apple, plum and cherry blossoms, making a visit there a truly memorable occasion.

Joy reigned supreme in the heart and anticipation in the mind of every enthusiastic grower of fine peonies—whether amateur or professional—in 1925 as peony lovers began to look forward to local and national shows during the ensuing years, since that was the year in which Mr. Brand first offered for commercial sales, thirteen new introductions, which, of course, followed many other introductions of superlatively fine peonies in former years. These thirteen varieties

were as follows:

**Myrtle Gentry  
Hansina Brand  
Ella Christensen  
Blanche King  
Mrs. A. M. Brand  
Mrs. Frank Beach**

**Mrs. F. A. Goodrich  
Hazel Kinney  
Mrs. Romaine B. Ware  
Victory Chateau Thierry  
Laverne Christman  
Mrs. John M. Kleitsch  
Mrs. Harriet Gentry**

I had my first privilege of viewing these magnificent new peonies at the 1924 National Peony Show at Des Moines, Iowa, where they were enthusiastically viewed by all, who needed but one look to perceive the great contribution Mr. Brand had there made in the introduction of these new peonies, every one of which doubtless would take its place in the garden and at the show to delight and captivate the admiring eyes of enthusiasts by its great size, beauty of form, or perhaps its pleasing odor, or unusual and dissimilar color. Dissimilarity is a desired mark of merit in the introduction of any new flower, and we truly had it in some of these exquisite new peonies.

At the time of introduction, these 13 varieties were offered to professional growers at \$50.00 per root with no discount. That meant that one each of the 14 cost \$650.00, and, at the time I purchased all 13, I remember that, for a few dollars more than I paid for the 13, I could have purchased a then new Ford car.

Again, these 13 new varieties could then be purchased only under written contract, two stipulations of which were:

1st: No division or divisions from such plant could be sold for a sum less than \$50.00 until after the expiration of a four-year period.

2nd: None could be exchanged for other stock or traded or given away during the four-year period.

And, speedy as is time in its flight, it has been pleasing to observe that the highest expectations one held for these new Brand introductions at the time, have been fully justified, merited and established in practically every one of the 13 varieties, though it is true that certain of them carry slightly more merit and desirability than do three or four of the thirteen. The finest and best of these thirteen varieties in my opinion (though all are lovely and of a high degree of merit) are:

**Myrtle Gentry  
Hansina Brand  
Ella Christensen**

**Blanche King  
Mrs. Frank Beach  
Mrs. A. M. Brand**

Only those who have gone through the personal experience of becoming a self-made and self-appointed peony fan, can know the full measure of joy the future years shall bring to the enthusiastic peony lover, through the beauty, gigantic size, and dependability of this most wonderful of all flowers. He is utterly carried away by his enthusiasm so that cost of roots mean nothing to him. What's a hundred dollars, or two hundred, yet for approximately \$50.00 or even less, a dozen of the loveliest peonies grown can be had.

As one studies peonies and men, many a perfectly well-meaning man with a good aim, yet in a measure a wee bit lazy by nature in the things he may have regarded as not essential, has found an awakened will, cast off the habit of lethargy indifference, and has been, by his love of the peony, transformed into such ambitious labors in the garden that what he may formerly have regarded as "strenuous labors," in his new viewpoint becomes but a matter of joy and delight—in short, a labor of love. Hard work for him becomes easy, because every root he digs or plants, is handled tenderly and reverently since he ever seems inclined, at such time, to hold in mind the potential beauty it holds for someone.

The beginner shall ever find his road is easier, and his money and labors better and more advantageously spent, if he follows pretty closely the guidance and information which membership in the American Peony Society makes available.

In the early symposiums of the Society, great work was done in the rating and discarding of practically hundreds of varieties in commerce which bore undesirable characteristics, such as weak stem, poor substance, shy blooming qualities, etc. The work of the Society is whole-heartedly endorsed by every one who knows and loves peonies, and who is familiar with the Society's aims and accomplishments.

Sooner or later the merit of each newly introduced peony which finds its way into the channels of commerce shall be rated by the members of that Society. A strong stem, good color, form, fragrance, and other specific points in grading, each carry a percentage commensurate with its degree of merit as to what really constitutes the perfect flower. A rating of 10 is the highest possible rating. Yet a rating of 8 or better may be a desirable and fairly good peony. In my work with the peony I had at one time 513 varieties of all types, quite a few of which rated even below 8.0. Those which did rate below 8.0 either held characteristics that put them in the novelty class, or were singles or Japs in type, or, as in the case of one, *Eudulis Superba*, which holds such a delightful fragrance that it is practically indispensable solely because of its fragrance; others were gotten solely to enable me to carry on the most intensive studies possible, that I might eventually feel, with justification, that I knew the peony and knew it well.

To those who know the peony well, its desirability as a flower and its place in the garden, may be said to be marked for a few specific truths. We are living in an age where time to many of us is vital. For the tired businessman, or the delicate feminine gardener who is not blessed with a rugged physique and much muscle, the most desirable flowers in their eyes are those which give the most in beauty and dependability for the minimum expenditure of time, care, energy, and strenuous labors. And, if there is any known flower which does just that, it is the peony. If there is any known flower almost wholly free from injurious insect pests and infectious diseases, it is the peony.

One of the most frequent inquiries made upon the grower by the

beginning amateur in peony growing, concerns the existence of numerous small ants, which seem to converge on the bud in its latest stages of development seemingly to signalize the arrival of the "grand opening" of that bud into the flower. Concern with reference to these ants doing the flower damage may be promptly dispelled. The explanation of their presence on the bud at such time, is that, it is characteristic of the peony bud to exude a small amount of waxy substance. And the ants on the bud are after that wax, but as soon as the outer petals of the bud begin to open, the wax disappears and so do the ants.

While it is true, the peony shall bring the gardener greater rewards in return for a strict compliance with such cultural directions as would be laid down by the experts, such as proper and well-timed cultivation, and fertilizer rightly applied, yet if there is any flower which will sustain life and emerge at blooming time with a glorious array of lovely large blooms with little or no care (just so it is planted at proper depth of two inches in well-drained soil and weeds removed in April), that plant is the peony.

One of the questions the enthusiastic fan or the large grower is most often asked is: "How do they get new varieties?" I shall here answer that question, not for the purpose of urging amateurs to experiment but rather solely that those unfamiliar with the peony may have a better understanding as to just why new introductions of rare peonies are priced so much higher than those fine varieties which have been in the channels of commerce for a number of years.

The vast majority of fine peonies have been originated from seed. Once the blooming season is over and after the last petals fall, the flower carpels take on an enlarged size and extend in length. The carpels contain the seed, or may be said to be the seed pod. They much resemble the pod of the unshelled pea, and the seeds of the peony are similar in size to the majority of shelled peas, but slightly smaller in size than some.

It is from the planting of these seeds that new varieties of the peony are found, staked, marked and watched at blooming time when a record is kept of the individual characteristics of the comparatively few plants which have been staked among many, as giving promise of from year-to-year carrying the same characteristics, which, in the eye of the expert originator, give promise of a rather splendid fulfillment of the utmost to be desired in the way of a new introduction. Though some specific point, be it fragrance, exquisite form, strong stem, excellent color, may be more pronounced in a specific plant than are certain other points to be desired, yet all in all, any new seedling plant meriting staking for later observation with a view to note taking and ensuing introduction in the channels of commerce, must in the main be wholly free from any one objectionable characteristic, such as weak stem, off color, poor substance, poor blooming qualities, or absence of good form.

Before the planting of seed, however, there are a few things the experimenting amateur should bear in mind, and he should not be too quickly encouraged into such an experiment unless he has ample ground, a will to work, and a patience to wait, because of the comparative and vast number of seedlings he must work with and maintain, in order to get perhaps one or two of sufficient merit to number and later name.

If after blooming season the carpels or seed pods are left on the plant stem and in the sun for many days or a few weeks, the pod, as well as the shell protecting the seed kernel, turns from green to brown, and, if left longer, they later turn from brown to almost black. If so left on the plant in the intense rays of the summer sun, the seed pod, as well as the shell protecting the seed kernel, goes through the natural state of "dehydration" and becomes not only so discolored, but very hard. If such seeds are planted, it sometimes takes two years' time for the seed shell to break, and the little seedling plant to merge through the ground.

Accordingly, those amateurs who would try planting seed and would strive for quick results, should remove the carpels from the plant stem at the proper stage of ripening, seeing to it that it is reasonably well seasoned, but not attained that degree of coloring and hardness which would perhaps result in deferred sprouting by reason of the nut-like shell on the seed kernel having been left too long on the plant stem in the rays of the hot summer sun. If he cannot find time to plant them in the proper stage of ripening, he may control that stage of ripening by gathering the seed pods when in proper shape to plant, and then keeping them in a damp cool place until such time as they may be planted.

It is characteristic of the peony carpel or seed pod, to reflect its stages of ripening by changing from green to brown; and later from brown to black, but this discoloration in such carpel does not take place uniformly throughout the carpel in its entirety. In short, this protecting seed pod merely begins to show discoloration in spots, and, with the passing days the stage of ripening of the seeds may be pretty well determined by the extent to which the seed pod shell has turned from green to brown. My personal experimentation though not extensive (and such seedlings of merit as I have found have not been introduced commercially), but I prefer to gather such carpels from plant stem when about four-fifths of the carpels surface has turned to brown, and but a small portion yet remains green. Then before planting, the seeds may be shelled from the pod, just as peas are shelled, and allowed to dry for a few days when they are ready to plant.

At the proper stage of ripening then the seed may be planted in rows two inches apart in the row and with rows farther apart, which may be varied according to extent of space available and amount of seed to be planted. They should be planted in small seed beds over which are stretched screen wire, properly fastened to the seed bed

frame. This for the reason that, without such screen, heavy rains would tend to often wash out some of the soil, expose the seed, and thus make the seeds in general of irregular depth.

If seeds are so planted in Fall at a depth of one-and-one-half or two inches below ground level, the small plants should begin to show themselves the following Spring. If the little plants are allowed to so remain for another Spring to follow, and kept well weeded, by that time they will have attained such size that they may be lifted, and planted two or three feet apart in rows, and, from that time on, cared for in exactly the same manner as would the regular established plants for root propagation or cut flower purposes.

After having been thus planted in rows they must be cultivated and inspected annually at blooming time to stake and mark the comparatively few plants among many hundreds which seem to carry sufficient merit as to make such plant worthy of staking for future observation and note taking.

Those then who may view the price of a newly introduced peony of great merit as high, may well take into consideration that, from the gathering of the seed pods to these final inspections, observation and note taking at blooming time, and building up a stock of such seedling of merit, years of time is required before introducing the variety into the channels of commerce. Taking that into consideration and combining with it the fact that for every one variety of sufficient merit to warrant introduction, several hundred other seedlings must be grown and cared for merely for observation, yet ultimately discarded since they possess no merit, while the few—yes the very few—merit number and perhaps later a name.

Taking into consideration the tedious and meticulous care that must be exercised in handling and maintaining seedling beds and seedlings until they have served their purpose, the labors performed in connection therewith, the years of patient waiting and detailed note taking, it should be readily understood that the originator of a fine peony must protect himself by asking a very good price on each newly introduced peony of great merit.

To those unfamiliar with the many thousands of dozens of cut peonies sold each year for Memorial Day purpose, in every metropolitan city, it would be astounding to many if they could but know that number. To every great city then, the reliable cut flower peony grower renders a good service, and he looks upon that fact reverently, if he be one who really conducts a high standard of business, and merits the good will of both customers and competitors.

And again, no Memorial Day season ever arrives when cutting time comes, that I do not say to myself that if Mr. Brand had introduced only one peony to the peony world and had given us no other peony than his lovely red Mary Brand, his would still have been a very great contribution to the peony world. Why, simply because Mary



**Brand** is the perfect red peony for cutting and has no equal for cut flower purposes.

There is another red variety, **Karl Rosenfield**, just about equal to **Mary Brand** in beauty and color, but at times of rain on the buds before cutting, as the bud becomes slightly loose, the outer petals catch and hold the water, which renders the bud wholly unfit for cutting or storing. On the other hand, no such experience is ever encountered with **Mary Brand**. It can rain torrents in one hour on **Mary Brand**. The sun may come out, and in a half hour, they may be cut with no harmful effects whatever having been encountered by the rain. This water-logging of buds by the variety **Karl Rosenfield** does not happen every year, but on many seasons it does. It occurs so often that I think every cut flower man who grows both reds extensively for cutting, just about every year, must sing the high praises of Mr. Brand for having given us such a fine cutting red as **Mary Brand**.

The grower is often asked what varieties of the peony are recommended for cemetery planting. The answer to this question must vary with respect to the climatological conditions existing through a normal season at the location to be planted. The difference in the blooming periods as between north and south in even a distance of one hundred fifty or two hundred miles, would hardly be believed by those not familiar with the peony. When peonies are at their loveliest and best in period of bloom at Topeka, one may go two hundred miles north to Nebraska or Iowa, and the first petals of only the very earliest varieties are breaking loose to mark the beginning of the blooming season.

I can remember many a year when at the start of our blooming season in Topeka from one to three large trucks from northern Nebraska, or Iowa, or northern points, would show up in Topeka and almost beg reliable Topeka Growers to sell them one's entire cutting field at a splendid price, with all labor, cutting, wrapping, and storing to be done by the purchaser.

Those desirous of knowing what varieties to plant in a cemetery, therefore, should ask the reliable grower for recommendations because of the truths indicated above. This is so because the reliable grower who grows peonies extensively and knows them well, shall base his recommendations on when a normal season at blooming time brings each respective variety to its fullest and best in typical bloom.

In accepting such recommendations and acting upon them the purchaser should ever bear in mind that such recommendations were based upon a normal, typical season for that particular locality. Yet the fact remains, if a blooming season be preceded by a protracted period of abnormally low precipitation, combined with much cool and cloudy weather, the blooming time of any peony field may be delayed a week or ten days, or even more. Because of such truth even the reliable grower well-schooled in the habits of each respective variety, could not

be expected to guarantee that a recommended variety for cemetery planting shall be at "its loveliest and best period of bloom" on Memorial Day. The best he can do is to weigh all relevant facts, and make such recommendation as, in his opinion, will make most propitious the chances of such planted variety blooming on Memorial Day.

In the territory of Topeka and vicinity, if three peonies are desired on cemetery lots, I unhesitatingly recommend these three favors:

White -	Mrs. Frank Beach
Pink -	Nancy Dolman
Red -	Philippe Rivoire

Every one of these are a variety of loveliness and dependability and sure blooming qualities, and sufficiently late, so that almost without exception, especially in a normal season, they are blooming at their best on Memorial Day.

For the really large professional grower who, year in and year out, strives to enter into the sweepstake exhibit at the National Peony Show, the two weeks prior to the show date are always anxious days of much concern. True, most of them have ample help to whom can be entrusted all other phases of his cutting field for commercial purpose, and all phases of his local sales of all other horticultural offerings if he be a general nurseryman; but the true peony enthusiast who conducts a high standard of business and who merits the highest praise as a real peony authority, usually prefers always to personally cut such buds as he may contemplate entering at a National Show. In consequence, such two weeks period is always one of concern to him as to what each coming day may bring in the way of weather. Often at a time when favorable weather would bring much to cut in potentially great prize-winning buds, the day may bring heavy rain and wind which must, at such time, somewhat dampen his spirit as well as his peony field, in addition to further delaying what already may have been a much delayed peony season. This anxiety, however, over some of the lovely late blooms not being at their best in time for the National Show, is not too great, inasmuch as almost without exception, the date set for a National Show is deferred sufficiently late in June so that many of the very late varieties, even in northern territory, may be cut for exhibition purposes in sufficient time to make the date of the National Show. The fact remains, however, that most growers who enter this sweepstakes exhibit of one hundred varieties of the National Show, do grow a great many more varieties than that, and, should they experience a much belated season, or one in which certain rare varieties do not turn out well, they usually can lean to other varieties in proper stage for cutting, which give them a sufficient number above the 100 varieties so that, in setting up their exhibit, they may cull out a few of their poorest and still have remaining 100 varieties of lovely typical bloom for their sweepstakes exhibit.

Again, while the outstanding professionals who annually exhibit at National Shows have their ups and downs in the way of high hopes being slightly marred by ensuing unfavorable weather, or other conditions, yet the fact remains most of them, when not favored by good weather, are in position to go ahead and do the best they can with what they have, and be quite happy in the glory of well remembered past performances, which have been rather accurately measured and well remembered in the public eye.

One of the very pleasing things to me has been to occasionally view the young and unknown exhibitor win certain outstanding recognition at National Shows. In my fair city of Topeka, peony enthusiasts are quite proud of the accomplishments of Myron D. Bigger, and some of the awards he has won at the National Shows. Also we are quite proud of the measure of his work as an originator. He has introduced commercially several excellent new varieties, among which is a gigantic red, "KANSAS" by name, and it gives me a great deal of joy to know that Mr. Brand has spoken of this variety most highly. Yes, indeed, it is with pride that Topekans point to the accomplishments of Mr. Bigger who not only won the National Sweepstakes at Lincoln, Nebraska in 1937, but repeated this grand accomplishment in 1942 when the National Peony Show was held in his hometown of Topeka. Those two noteworthy achievements on the part of Mr. Bigger certainly are a mark of wise planning, and that hair-trigger will and wisdom that prompted him to put forth his best efforts on those occasions, when the National Peony Show happened to be staged nearest to or in his hometown.

Again, I can never look back into the joys of years that have passed in work with the peony, without recognizing in the reflected light of experience, the splendid work of one who then, as now, knew and loved the peony well, namely Dr. C. F. Menninger, the well-known father of Drs. Karl and W. C. Menninger, who, as a family, have combined to put Topeka on the psychiatric map through the foundation of the Menninger Clinic, the scope of its work being not only national, but international as well. Dr. Menninger was the earliest grower of really fine peonies in Topeka who knows and loves the peony well. The first lovely peonies I ever looked upon were in his gardens.

With respect to specific varieties of peonies and the purpose for which some may be grown, it seems that, unlike styles in dresses or suits, there are a few old ones that "never go out of style;" they are never wholly displaced by new introductions.

Of two I have most conspicuously in mind, *Festiva Maxima*, a white with conspicuous carmine blotches was introduced in 1851, so it has been good for 99 years and is still going strong, having a place in nearly every peony show whether local or national in scope.

Again, there is another lovely pink, bomb type, *Monsieur Jules Elie* by name, introduced in 1888, and that variety has been given its

share of beauty to peony fanciers for sixty-two years. As a cut flower it is grown extensively by most reliable cut flower growers who wish to give their customers the best in what is lovely. Its deep pink color and gigantic size, makes a typical bloom of this variety no less a joy to be peony fans than do many of the loveliest of the outstanding new varieties. Reference to this variety which peony enthusiasts have been enjoying for 62 years, reminds me that I spent my 1949 vacation in Chicago. I chanced to stay at the Palmer House while there. The hotel's floral sales room proved so lovely, I strolled in there on a few occasions. It was May time. Magnificent blooms of this variety were on sale. I casually asked the price. That price was \$7.50 a dozen, while I have seen this variety sold for Memorial Day in the old price-cutting days for 35¢ a dozen.

The true peony fan with an active imagination and a retentive memory finds that time never drags on his hands. In this connection, I recall once having seen—I think pretty close to Broadway and 42nd Street, New York City—on some building, associated press reports of the latest news flashed out on a neon sign at all hours of the day and night, as the very latest news traveled around that building. So now, even on wintry nights with the wintry wind howling around the corner, if I am pretty well caught up with my reading and do not have occasion to go to a show, I just sit relaxed, rig up my imaginary Neon sign, touch an imaginary button, and let a few hundred different varieties of peonies slowly travel around that sign one at a time in my imaginations' eyes; if I want to dwell a little longer on one than on the other, I merely touch an imaginary button and she stops. At such times I see each peony as vividly and distinctly as I have been viewing them in my gardens for 27 years; see them in every characteristic of each individual variety as plainly as though I were standing over the blooming plant in my garden. Yes, the blooming period for some of us may be about 20 days in late May and early June, but for me the blooming period is 365 days in the year, with result that time never drags.

Thus, as I view in retrospection twenty-seven years of work and joy with the peony, those years have truly been years of joy and delight. During that time, I have ever sung the praises of this variety or that one, but I am very glad that, with equal vigor, I have sung the praises of those great originators who have made their respective contributions to the world in the introduction of new varieties: Viz, Brand, Franklin, Sass, Nichols, Shaylor, Auten, Kelway, Lemonine, Doriat, et al, but particularly Brand. Yes, life is better because of their splendid and untiring work with the peony and, at approach of age, I now just smile a little and repeat to myself a few words from a line of poetry I believe by Longfellow, "Men may come and men may go," and then I pause a while and say to myself, "But peonies bloom on forever."

**(MY 25 FAVORITES, WITH NAME OF ORIGINATOR)**

**NAME OF VARIETY ORIGINATOR**

<b>Kelways Glorious</b>	<b>Kelway</b>	<b>Victory Chateau Thierry</b>	<b>Brand</b>
<b>Mrs. Frank Beach</b>	<b>Brand</b>	<b>Mrs. Livingston Farrand</b>	<b>Nichols</b>
<b>Mrs. A. M. Brand</b>	<b>Brand</b>	<b>Mrs. F. D. Roosevelt</b>	<b>Franklin</b>
<b>Hans. Peter Sass</b>	<b>Sass</b>	<b>Loren Franklin</b>	<b>Franklin</b>
<b>Elsa Sass</b>	<b>Sass</b>	<b>Ella Lewis</b>	<b>Lewis</b>
<b>A. B. Franklin</b>	<b>Franklin</b>	<b>Nancy Dolman</b>	<b>Vories</b>
<b>Mrs. J. V. Edlund</b>	<b>Edlund</b>	<b>Nick Shaylor</b>	<b>Shaylor</b>
<b>Myrtle Gentry</b>	<b>Brand</b>	<b>Mme. Emile De Batene</b>	<b>Doriat</b>
<b>Hansina Brand</b>	<b>Brand</b>	<b>Philippe Rivoire</b>	<b>Rivoire</b>
<b>Blanche King</b>	<b>Brand</b>	<b>Ruth Elizabeth</b>	<b>Brand</b>
<b>Ella Christensen</b>	<b>Brand</b>	<b>Mrs. Bryce Fontaine</b>	<b>Brand</b>
<b>Martha Bullock</b>	<b>Brand</b>	<b>Matila Lewis</b>	<b>Saunders</b>
<b>Mrs. Deane Funk</b>	<b>Brand</b>	<b>Dixie</b>	<b>Franklin</b>

Inasmuch as in the above list of my twenty-five favorite varieties, ten of them were originated by Mr. Brand, it should then be easily understood that this is but one of the very many good reasons why I personally would nominate Mr. Brand as "The Burbank of The Peony World."

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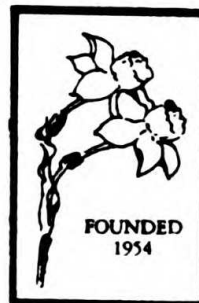
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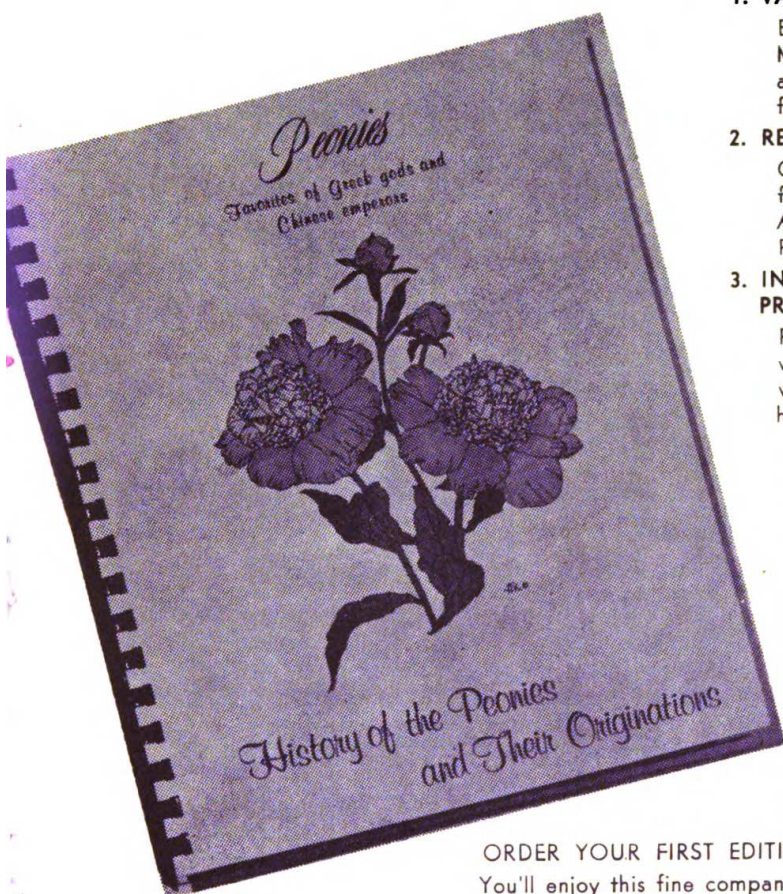
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