



AMERICAN Peony Society Bulletin



June 1986 — No. 258

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BULLETIN COVER—Landscape border garden of Nathan and Thelma Rudolph, Aurora, Ill. showing peonies, lupines and iris. The Rudolfs are noted hybridizers of peonies, iris and daylilies. The firey red hybrid peony **AMERICA** is a Rudolph Introduction.



FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

CHRIS LANING

SPRING — AH — SPRING

Four months ago, winter was giving us gray skies and white snow—more than enough! That is history and now we are reveling in spring warmth and beauty. To the gardener, peonies offer a delight par-excellent possessing the power of displacing thoughts of weeding and cultivating drudgery with smiles of loveliness. Loveliness must be shared; this, too, is made possible by attending and displaying our flowers at the American Peony Show. People are important, too! Talk to any one of them and you will know you have found a friend. Some of us are old, but we're still pretty.

One wonders if the peony is all that one could desire. Among all the different varieties with their various sizes, shapes, and colors, there ought to be one that is exactly right for you. There was a peony flower on display several years ago at our Peony Show which was small, single, white, edged in bright pink, having serrated or notched petal edges, standing among flowers which were much larger, almost ostentatious. There was a man, among many, who took note of it and must have been impressed with what he saw for he returned several times seeming to enjoy it. Sometime later, his wife came along with him; she, too, viewed the flower and promptly ignored it! (Beauty is ephemeral.) And the flower?—it was Haycyon F₂, a product from the hand of Prof. Saunders.

Goals for the hybridizer keep shifting and changing. The seventies saw the striving for peonies with yellow flowers; now we are thinking about the greens, blues, and purples as desirable. Maybe the Nineties will be dedicated to dwarfs and reblooming miniatures. Change is the only peculiar characteristic that remains the same.

EXPECT NOTHING AND YOU MAY BE PLEASANTLY OCCASIONALLY SURPRISED, BUT NEVER DISAPPOINTED.

—Chris

AMERICAN PEONY SOCIETY CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION

June 13-14-15, 1986

APACHE PLAZA, 3800 Silver Lake Road, St. Anthony, Minnesota

Motel Accommodations:

Cricket Inn, 2550 Cleveland Ave. North, Roseville, Minnesota
Toll free No. 1-800-622-3999

Holiday Inn, 2540 Cleveland Ave. North, Roseville, Minnesota
Toll free No. 1-800-H-O-L-I-D-A-Y

Both motels are less than 2½ miles from Apache Plaza.

For those coming by plane to the International Airport,
Minneapolis-St. Paul:

*A St. Paul Limo 6-7 N.W. is located directly across from the
baggage pick-up on the street level. This Limo leaves every
fifteen minutes and will take you directly to either motel. Cost
\$7.50 per person.*

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS—See March Bulletin #257.

EDUCATIONAL EXHIBIT

This year at the National Show an extra effort will be made to educate the public about peony types, origins, etc. A good place to start is the Court of Honor Candidates section after the blue-ribbon winners have been moved to the CH table. The remaining flowers are still the second-best blooms in the show and represent all the major peony types, flower forms, and colors. All that is needed to convert this section to an educational exhibit is some species exhibits and a few explanatory signs.

Bill Seidl has made some signs and will organize the section. Interested members are asked to bring stems of species peonies (and near-species hybrids) showing the variety of foliage of the peony. (These are for educational purposes only and will not be judged.) It is expected that the bloom will be spent but the carpels are best left intact. Some suggested species would be *tenuifolia* (fernleaf), *macrophylla*, *officinalis*, *lobata*, *smouthi* (anomala), *mlokoewitschi*, *suffruticosa* (moutan), *lutea*, and selected hybrids. Perhaps stalks showing relative heights could be displayed, as 'White Innocence' vs. 'Dutch Dwarf.'

Members living close to the show area probably are better able to bring this material in fresh condition than those traveling long distances.

REGISTER NEW PEONIES

J. Franklin Styer, West Chester, Pa.

The American Peony Society holds the position of International Registry Authority for the Family Paeoniaceae and Genus Paeonia. This is a monogeneric family. The Society's status is as a horticultural agency, not a botanical one, but it does have interest in the botany of peonies.

The duty of the Society is to keep track of the horticulture of peonies, register all cultivars (C.V.) in the genus, and adjudicate controversy. It is expected to hold a basic record of peonies in commerce and gardens; that is, to list all cultivars in use. This list may soon become complete.

The naming of species peonies is subject to botanical rules as published. The naming of cultivars, however, is the responsibility of the Society. Any new cultivar must be registered by the Society, which will apply the rules of the International Code of Horticultural Nomenclature and has authority to approve or deny the proposed name. The chief, but not the only, reason for this is the prevention of duplicate names, such as has existed for 'Venus' and many others.

The name must be approved before the cultivar is catalogued or sold. The cultivar may not be shown under an unregistered name in shows sponsored by the Society but may be shown under a number, tentatively.

The Society also has the right to classify cultivars, if felt desirable, and to name such classes—examples: "Itoh Hybrids," and "Tenuifolia Group." Since most cultivars are lactifloras, that group need not be presently expressly named. But the coming hybrid groups quite definitely need to be distinguished; and likewise all the present tree peony population. As such plants go into commerce they will be subject to the Rules. Personal names such as "Saunders" will be frowned upon and groups may better be named by leading cultivars, such as "Red-Charm Group."

The Secretary is supported in this work by a nomenclatural committee of the Society.



Plant Patent Issued

Patent Number PP5718 was issued to Don Hollingsworth for his Itoh Hybrid peony 'Garden Treasure' on April 15, 1986. This peony was formerly grown under seedling number Hollingsworth 205. Propagation rights are reserved by the originator.

SPECIES IN ITALY — TREE PEONIES

Gian Lupo Osti, Via M. Mercati 17/A, Rome, Italy 00197

My interest in peonies? Well, my favorite diversion all along for my free time is to walk around the Mediterranean hills. The flora and the scenery are so beautiful and everything is so intertwined with our myths, religions, history and culture! If you like to go around in the Mediterranean landscape, you cannot miss seeing peonies, sooner or later. Every island from Rhodos (*P. rhodia*) to the Balears (*P. cambessedesii*) has its own species as every mountain from the sierras in Portugal and Spain (*P. broteri*) to the highlands in Anatolia (*P. arietina*). In Italy, the most frequent species is *P. officinalis*, rare, but present, on all the Alps and in the Northern and Central Apennines. *P. mascula* is in every region and in the main islands. *P. peregrina* (I don't know if you recognize it as a different species or as just a form of *officinalis*—I abhor taxonomic discussions) is present in the Val d'Orfento, on the foot of the Majella Mountain, in Central Italy near the Adriatic coast; not just in one place, but in hundreds.

At the end of June I went there just to look at the flowers. There was still, in some places, more than one meter of snow, left from an avalanche from the mountain in late spring but the peonies were all in flower and also some lilies (*L. martagon* and *L. bulbiferum*). The contrast of colors and the scenery all around was really of dramatic beauty! Finally, in Sardinia we have *P. coriacea* (Italian botanists think that *P. russi* can be grouped in this species, more frequent in Spain and Morocco)—all herbaceous. Of course, once your interest is aroused, you will not be content just with them. In Italian gardens you will not see tree peonies very often and, apart from some very special garden such as Villa Taranto on the Lake Maggiore or Ninfa in the foothill of Sermoneta, 30 KM south from Rome, they are mostly with the magenta-pinkish plain flower.

Being in Japan in May some years ago, I visited the Nara temple gardens, and when I returned home I had some dozens of tree peonies in my baggage. At that time I bought tree peonies everywhere: in China, USA, and in Europe, of course. I had the luck to find a good group of old European varieties in a small German nursery which was giving up their propagation. I had some successes and some failures. My experience of tree peonies grafted on herbaceous root is not very positive: if you do not clip off the understock after 2-3 years, when the scions have rooted, you will never get a well-formed plant. At least in my garden, near the Lake of Bolsena, 120 km north from Rome, on the old route to Florence and Siena, there is no doubt about this necessity.

In case of a tree peony understock, the situation is more encouraging, but I have to admit that it is impossible to recognize the suckers from the understock from those of the grafted variety. Consequently I had some casualties, just for this reason. This was the reason why I started some experiments on propagating peonies from cuttings under

mist. I knew that in France, at the end of last century, there was a nursery that did it and that "Cherry" Ingram was currently doing it. When I adopted very strict procedures of sanitary control both of the rooting medium and of the water used, I had a good percentage of success, 70% and more. But it was not so easy to get cuttings of the better varieties (Louis Smirnow also sent me some cuttings.) Finally, the result of a study on this subject for achieving an economic break-even where I could monopolize all the European sales of tree peonies was not feasible. However, in Europe, you can get tree peonies in bulk from Japan (always grafted on herbaceous root) via Holland at quite a low price that is equal to U.S. \$3.00-\$4.00 (in connection with the exchange rate). They are not very good plants, small, in pots 14 cm (5½"). Maybe they will flower the first year, but for utilizing them in the garden you have to take them for 1-2 years under special, intensive care. I wonder if this is a consequence of the fact that in China and Japan, potted tree peonies are used in houses like we use azaleas. What is important is to have the flower; after that, they are thrown away as you would do with cut flowers. Anyway, I decided to give up this project of propagating tree peonies from cuttings on a commercial scale. I still do it if there is a particular plant I want to duplicate, or for having some plants to give to friends and visitors. I also currently propagate some plants from seed, hoping always to produce a new, outstanding cultivar. **Stendhal, the famous French writer, in his treatise *De l'Amour* says that every passion is the result not just of attraction, but of a more complex emotional situation of internal storms and sunshine, delights and stings, and peonies provide all this with their beauty and capriciousness. I know, Stendhal doesn't refer to plants, but . . . do you get the connection?

**(I hope that, soon, somebody will succeed to propagate tree peonies from meristem cells, so that we will have good plants true to their names.)



SPECIAL EXHIBITS FOR THE CONVENTION

Peonies of Greece: Myth, Science and Art. This exhibition highlights the peony in Greek mythology—the cultivation and distribution of the peony within Greece and around the world. It is housed at the Bell Museum of Natural History at the University of Minn.

The University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum will have the great exhibit of Sir Peter Smithers collection of photographs of the Japanese Tree Peony. This collection was on display at the Cernuschi Art Museum in Paris, Brooklyn Botanic Gardens and other museums.

LANDSCAPE PLACEMENT OF PEONIES

by Don Hollingsworth, Kansas City, Missouri

Growing peonies and seeing them flower is a sufficient joy of itself for many plant lovers. How and where they fit into the surroundings may be of little concern.

On the other hand, interior and exterior decoration is a popular theme in our culture and the idea of creating beauty is well established as a loftier goal. For this or other, perhaps more basic, reasons, some of us are uncomfortable unless we have applied a measure of logic and form in deciding where to place the items which we add to our surroundings. Picking the placement of our peony plants can become a matter of creative interest. The purpose of this article is to offer one man's thoughts on ways to approach the task.

First, there is the more mundane, but essential matter of what it takes to produce fine peony flowers. The site is an important part of success. Peonies want a fertile soil—this means a good level of humus, as well as mineral fertility—and the site must be well-drained. The latter is necessary because peonies cannot survive poor aeration of the soil around the roots. Thus, placement of peonies in many locations can require considerable soil modification, if they are to have a chance to perform in the manner we expect of them. It is also important to start with healthy, vigorous divisions. The smaller the division, the more important it is that optimum growing circumstances be provided (this is where the idea of “nursery” comes in, a place where small plants or propagation pieces can be carried to a better planting-out size). Peonies usually perform best when cultivated, reducing competition.

Another consideration in growing peonies that should be emphasized is that of keeping the foliage and stems free of fungus diseases. One reason is that the quality of flowering depends on the amount of growth in the storage roots the summer before. Loss of leaf surface to fungus infections reduces the rate of food production. In many sections of the world where peonies are grown, climate conditions are favorable to the infection and spread of leaf diseases. While these leaf infections rarely destroy plants in one season, they can be responsible for decline over several seasons. Fungi are also responsible for root rot, which can lead to destruction in one season.

The importance of plant health in landscape appearance cannot be over-emphasized. While the autumnal decline of foliage is quite compatible with landscape appearance, unseasonal death of foliage is distracting.

Some peonies inherently decline in midsummer, somewhat as daffodils and other spring bulbs, although usually later. The *Officinalis* and *Lobata* Hybrids are notable groups which tend to this pattern of growth. Since peonies are a factor in border height and provide background for other plants in certain situations, one needs to anticipate whether the variety being placed will cause an unwanted “hole” to come in the border when the foliage goes bad. A more

dramatic illustration of this problem can be envisioned in a row of peonies, say along the side of the front yard, where you mostly have plants of Chinese peonies (*Paeonia lactiflora*) which hold their foliage right into autumn in most varieties, but with one or more Lobata of Perry Hybrids, most of which tend to die-back in mid-summer. Sometime before autumn the hybrid foliage will naturally decline. When you groom the border by taking out the spent stems, there is a "hole" in your row. You can prevent this at planting time and still not give up having the beautiful hybrid colors at flowering. Simply put the hybrids on one end of the row. When the offending foliage is groomed out, everything looks about the same, except the row is shorter for the balance of the season.

Cut-flowers may be most conveniently grown on peony plants placed in "island" beds in a utility area, as one does with a vegetable plot, out of the public portion of the grounds. The big double peony flowers may be spoiled by rain, their stems broken down due to water-logged flowers, as well as the flower life being shortened. Grown in a cut-flower area, the blossoms can be freely cut and taken indoors, without diminishing the publicly viewed borders. Of course, big flowered peonies in public areas can be given extra support and their appearance thereby largely preserved out-of-doors, even in rainy weather.

Choose varieties which are less vulnerable to rain damage for easiest maintenance of border appearance. Those which bear their flowers closest to the bush are not so vulnerable to stem breakage by water-logged flowers. Also, some varieties are notably better equipped to resist stem leaning or breakage. The less double forms are not prone to hold great quantities of water. The single and Japanese flower forms are best in this respect. However, the bomb double form presents a nice compromise, having a more single form on first opening, but taking on the large size of the full doubles as the flower matures. Also, the fact of the bomb form growing over a period of several days gives extra interest in the border.

Flower color is a factor in border appearance. In light colors of white, blush, light pink, and yellows, the large flowers of peonies are notable at relatively great viewing distances. At similar distance some of the red flowers may go nearly unnoticed. Most photography buffs have had the experience of taking a black and white photo of a gorgeous red peony and have seen the red show up as black holes in the greys of the foliage. This is similar to the effect of viewing them at longer distances in the landscape. Place the red flowering choices at the near locations and limit the longer views to the lighter colored forms. This principle can be applied to distant borders. For example, walking through a large garden, as one comes around an out-curve of shrubbery, the near peonies might be red.

Color enthusiasts are sometimes interested in weaving subtle color sequences into their landscape borders. This is an obvious challenge, since one will have to collect knowledge and experience in

not only color of specific varieties, but the timing of flowering, etc. Whether or not one is approaching this advanced challenge in border arrangement, it may be of interest to note that both blue-based reds and yellow-based reds occur in peony flowers. The range and variety of reds have been expanded immensely with the production of interspecies hybrids. These reds appear both as entire colored flowers, as is widely known, and as the pigment of the subtle markings in the fascinating range of pastel colors which have appeared among the modern hybrids. These pastel variations are of great interest to some flower arrangers, but they so far occur most prevalently in less double forms, therefore fitting nicely into the logic of selecting peonies for landscape borders.

It is perhaps obvious, but nevertheless of great importance, in the landscape placement of peonies to keep in mind where they fit into the structural design hierarchy of plants. It is the woody plants which stand highest in this hierarchy. Trees are the most dominant, grading down to the finest textured twiggy shrubs. The trees and larger shrubs give the height and enclosure functions in landscape design. Herbaceous plants contribute filler and color. While the tree peonies are shrubs, they are not strong structural contributors. Herbaceous peonies are of strong texture and fairly massive among the non-shrub plants. Most peonies including tree peonies come into use as facers for intermediate shrubs. They may provide transition areas to lesser-texture border plants or may be a major factor throughout a border. The latter application is well known by peony fanciers—we are continually running out of space for our latest additions!

While structural elements which give height and enclosure are extremely valuable in landscape good appearance, it is not necessary to obtain all of this with living materials. When space is at a premium in a key location, it may be impossible to both give room for background plants for your peonies to be seen against, and have room for the peonies. Consider a fence of boards or other suitable materials. This can be combined with appropriate shrubbery for border ends. A nice feature of the fence is that it is the right size when placed. Another is that it does not compete for moisture and soil.

Peonies can be used in an infinite array of situations in the home garden and institutional plantings. How one chooses to use them is an individual choice. When given growing conditions which are suitable to their needs, peonies will perform the beautiful flowering for which they are desired. How much more complex one may wish to make the task of weaving them into their larger surrounding can be as challenging and delightful as it takes to meet one's fancy!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Peonies are used so effectively in landscape beautification. Write your favorite idea or design. We look forward to hearing from you!

FLOWER PHOTO TIPS

by Anthony De Blasi, West Newfield, Maine

A good photograph is, 99% of the time, no accident. The aim-and-shoot school photography—OK for capturing break-dancers or UFO's—is essentially wasteful. Investment in time and film is best served by a little thought and planning.

Except to remind that hand-held shots under 1/100 second risk blurring, that closeups should be taken on a tripod, and that slower films produce sharper pictures, I leave the technical details to the individual photographer to check out.

In general, for photographing flowers in color, the best light is that of a hazy or bright cloudy day. Diffused light minimizes shadows and registers subtle differences in color. If you must shoot in the glare of the sun, reflect some light into the shadows with white poster boards or aluminum foil, strategically placed. If, on the other hand, you are aiming for the drama of direct light, let it come from the side or slightly behind the flower. A striking effect is that of a blossom in full sunshine with the background in total shadow, as near the edge of a shadow-line.

Before pressing the shutter, decide exactly what the picture is to be. A scene? A flower bed? A group of flowers? A single blossom? A formation of carpel and stamens? With photography, you don't try to get in as much as you can. You don't try to kill two birds with one stone. You name ONE subject and concentrate on making it the center of interest. Remember, you are SELECTING from the jumble out there a PICTURE that you want your camera to record. Scan the subject through the viewer, moving from side to side, up and down, forward and backward, until you have excluded EVERYTHING that is not part of your PICTURE. For example, a single blossom should occupy most of the frame in your viewer; move in until it does. If there is significant space around the flower, ask yourself, "Is this space an important part of my picture? Flowers are patient; take your time.

Backgrounds must not be allowed to obtrude on the center of interest. If necessary, move the subject to a more favorable location. If you can't, then frame it against the sky (if it's blue) or purposely blur the background by using a wide F-stop, and focusing with extra care.

For the sake of keeping future slide shows lively, take a variety of broad views, closeups, and angles (look UP at a flower as well as down or to the side). Add depth to your scenes by including something in the foreground, such as a tree branch framing the view. Keep horizon lines level. If what is on the ground is more interesting than what is in the sky, place the horizon line up above the center.

Avoid the mug-shot approach of placing the center of interest smack in the center of the frame, unless you are working on a documentary lineup—to "compare notes" with other gardeners, for example. Keep your eye in training. Expert "advice" on composition is as close

as your 'TV screen. Study it. Observe how rarely symmetry is used. Notice where in the frame the heads of people are placed. Documentaries like "Nature" are an excellent source of ideas and inspiration.

Finally, groom your subject. Cut off dead twigs; camouflage, or remove, diseased or chewed-up petals and leaves, unless that is what you are documenting.

Two useful books on the subject are: **HOW TO PHOTOGRAPH FLOWERS** by Derek Fell, and **GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHY** by Charles Marden Fitch.

A VISIT TO THE REATH NURSERY

Tom Richards, Boyceville, Wisconsin

It was our pleasure this year to drive to Vulcan, Michigan and see the Reath Nursery. Their gardens are so very impressive, from the vast beds of hosta under towering white pine trees in front of the beautiful sited house and office, to the working garden at the 'farm.' This overlooks the rolling northern Michigan forests and then finally to the formal tree peony show garden literally tucked away in a maize of back roads in a secluded woods.

We spent an afternoon in quiet wonderment. While we were early for most of the hybrid herbaceous varieties and the overcast skies kept the blossoms from fully opening, we did enjoy row after row of Saunders and Daphnis' tree peonies. These were all new and glorious to us.

What a huge contribution to the horticultural world is the difficult task of propagating famous tree varieties but Dr. Reath's efforts do not stop there. Here and there he showed us his own developments, handsome landscape hybrids including the revolutionary **WIND CHIMES**—a cross of **EARLY WINDFLOWER** that has extremely early small lavender flowers on a dense bush of finely cut foliage. We left with assurance that we could order a division of **WIND CHIMES** in the fall.

Back home, we did enjoy our much more modest peony patch. Presently, we have collected 130 varieties. I am searching for peonies that are perfect landscape plants that display beautiful flowers on strong handsomely arranged stems.

At the top of my list of plants filling these criterion are **PAULA FAY**, a brilliant pink semi-double, **ROSELETTE**, pink hybrid single, always dependable, **DUNLORA**, a white single with flowers situated directly above the foliage. (When the blooms close at night they look like large goose eggs balanced upright on the leaves.) Gus Sindt recommended **VANITY**, a light pink Japanese variety. Promising varieties that need more maturity in my garden include: **ELLEN COWLEY**, **REQUIEM**, **WEST ELKTON**, **LAURA DESSERT**, **DO TELL**, **BLAZE**, **LIEBCHEN**, **SUSIE Q**, **ROYAL ROSE**, **NELLIE**, **ROSEDALE**, **BRIDAL GOWN**, **MANDARIN'S COAT**, **VIRGINIA DARE** and several others. — 12 —

MINNESOTA PEONIES IN JUNE

by Bob Tischler, Faribault, Minnesota

JUNE—the month of the peony blooms in Minnesota—the month that all peony lovers here look forward to. It can't come too soon, after all the months of snow and cold that we have had this winter.

Before blooming time, there is always the cultivating and the weeding jobs to be done. The fields must be re-marked with new stakes and labeled correctly, as the old markers from last year have been broken off, or the lettering has faded away. Then when the terminal buds start to swell, all the side buds must be removed from the double varieties and some of the single and Japanese varieties also if one wants to see blooms in larger size. The grass has been mowed about the peony fields and all is ready for the first glimpse of color.

The buds are swelling fast and one knows that the first flower to show will be the ever-welcomed Fern Leaf Peony. This small, bright, red flower on light green foliage is always a sight to see. It does bloom too early for many of the average peony visitors, but the foliage still attracts them. We always hear someone say that they had a nice clump of this peony, but it died out. Apparently, they gave their neighbors and friends slips from the parent plant, and, in so doing, killed it off.

Every morning, from now on, brings some new flower into bloom. Within days there will be far too many blooms for one to count. Hybrids, singles and Japanese, and a few of the very early doubles, brighten the fields. All during the bloom period it is necessary to check and re-check each and every variety for trueness of name, and also variety in case of mix-ups. No matter how careful one can be, there is always this same problem every year.

Bloom time is also the time to check out those new varieties that you planted a year or so ago. Are they doing as well as you hoped for—or do you have one just as good or better? Let's wait another year and see how they are then. Now, too, is the time to remove those "rogues" or mix-ups. Dig them out and throw them away, unless you are sure of their rightful name. Then you can tag them for digging and replanting in the fall.

The seedling field must be checked at least four-to-five times a day, at least for me. The blooms look better or poorer at different times of the day—and then, there are always more opening up as the day gets warmer. I look for those that are well-shaped in the flower, or maybe a dwarf plant and flower, or any other thing that catches my eye as I walk amongst the patch. Sometimes, even the darnest-looking flower gets a tag. Of course, that outstanding (to you, anyway) show flower always draws a marking tag. Those that show poorly in both plant and flower are dug out and thrown away. This must be done when no visitors are about—as they want to know what you are doing and why—"Why are you destroying such a beautiful flower? May I have it?" I usually grow a seedling field for five-to-six years before it is completely destroyed. Many times there are a few late ones that show up that

somehow you have missed seeing before. Lots of years of work and effort goes into a new seedling, and it must be either different or better than anything else before you put it on the market. What appeals to one grower might not appeal to another.

If you have an indoor show, then visitors can come and go as they wish, regardless of the weather. But, with an outside garden, things can get quite different, especially when it rains. It is amazing the types of visitors one gets during the peony bloom season. Some are interested in just looking at the beautiful flowers, and others are interested in buying a few plants. There are those that drive up to the fields and never get out of their car. Some will stay in the car and point out a colored flower way across the field, and want to know its name. If you have already been out to see this flower, you will know it immediately; otherwise, you just walk out and find out what variety it is. Other folks come and spend hours just walking through the patch, listing the varieties that appeal to them. Some like the big full doubles and others are attracted to the bright colored hybrids or the eye-catching singles and Japanese. Many times the highest priced peonies in the fields are on their list, until the price becomes known. Many of the old-time peonies are still the favorite of many of the visitors.

If I know a buyer is just a home gardener, I try to point out the varieties that will do best for him year-after-year, with the least amount of care. Most of these gardeners will plant these peonies in some spot near a shrub, tree, or near their house foundation. Some times you will find a party looking for just the arrangement type of peony, flowers that are not too large in size and maybe different in color.

Then you will have those that will bring blooms to the field to identify—some times one or two blooms, but I have had as many as twenty. This is always a hard problem. Many times they bring side blooms, small in size, or blooms that are beyond their best condition. Some have been cut for days and look pretty ragged. First, they will go through the field trying to match blooms. Then, they will come to me. Some are varieties originated by other growers and one is not familiar with them at all. Many have been purchased from some place, by colors only. All one can say is that they look like so-and-so. Sure, there are the familiar varieties and those grown here can be identified easily.

Rainy days are the hardest as the fields get muddy and the plants get bent down. Still some folks come to see the flowers. Some are equipped with rain garments and overshoes. Then you have those that are going to see the flowers regardless of what; they remove their shoes and socks, roll up the pant legs, and get all muddied up—after which a good garden hose and water come in handy.

From early morn to late night, visitors come. It is not always that someone is at the field to help them, but usually these late visitors have just heard about the beautiful flowers and they must see them

before it is too late.

Towards the end of the bloom season, one wonders if it is a worthwhile project—but, yes, it is; just to see all those wonderful flowers and to again meet so many fine visitors. Many who come every year, come even just to say “hello!”

HOOPS AND HOOPS

Eldred E. Green, Horticulturist, Chicago, Ill.

A few weeks ago I was looking at a blue painted contraption and trying to explain how it had been used as a support for peonies in the long, long ago, circa 1930.

This hoop consisted of a wooden circle about 18 inches in diameter and 18 inches high. About six inches below hoop one was a slightly smaller circle about 16 inches across. These two wooden barrel hoops were connected by 4 wooden supports about 18 inches high that were nailed around the rim. This produced a somewhat tapered cage rather resembling the wire tomato cages on the market.

This particular hoop which had survived nearly a half century of use had been obtained from a peony fancier who had finally gotten tired of taking up and storing about 60 of these and then putting them out over the new shots as they came up. It was quite a lot of work but necessary if good bloom was to be obtained from the varieties at that time—varieties that grew several feet tall with thin flexible stems that ended in huge double flowers. A little rain or wind and the big blossoms were lying in the dust or mud. Hoops were designed to prevent the flowers from actually reaching the ground. Taller hoops would keep them more upright.

Thinking about hoops led me to recall another kind that someone had persuaded my father into buying. This was a heavy piece of wire about a foot high with a little hook on the bottom which made it hard to put in the soil. At the top was a circle of wire like a spring. Extending to the left from this spring the wire went another foot with an upright piece at the end. This entire piece was curved. The object of this weird device was to hook the upright stub on the curved piece into the little spring of an upright piece. Three or more hooked together formed a somewhat circular hoop. The little hooked piece on the leg was supposed to be hooked on the top of another so that several hoops could be stacked up to give any desired height. While this was supposed to keep peonies up and unsullied the mechanics of hooking the various pieces together especially after they had been used and bent out of shape, was quite a task. Assembling these around the plants and then storing them, was also quite a task—usually accompanied by language that good gardeners shouldn't use. I only used a couple of these to see how they worked. My father had taken care of most of the others.

Fortunately, when my own interest in peonies took hold I was

privileged to meet two fine growers and friends, R. A. Napier and W. F. Christman. Both of these gentlemen cautioned me against being overwhelmed by fine flowers in a peony show. Mr. Napier pointed out problems of staking that he had in producing prize-winning blooms. (He consistently took first in Class I, only it was 125 varieties at that time, not 25, as now.) Mr. Christman took me through his fields at Northbrook Gardens and showed me the growth habits of the various kinds. He emphasized that poor growing habits were something to be avoided. He refused to sell me some of the fine French hybrids that were dominating the shows and insisted that I grow *Duluth*, *Mrs. Kleitsch*, etc. that would stand up in a downpour.

Years later, I became friends with the Klehm family and was introduced to the wonder *Estate Peonies*. These, along with the ones that Bill Christman had insisted that I grow, formed a peony garden that made the hoops, whether wooden or wire, obsolete.

Maybe I will take this old wooden hoop and hang it up in the tool shed as a memento of the work it took to grow mud-free peonies in the early days. We certainly owe a great many thanks to many growers who have produced our modern, tough, upright, garden varieties. If I should discover any of the old wire kind somewhere, I will throw them out.



Peonies require a well-drained location where the sun is present the larger part of the day.

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

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

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

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

—From W. F. Christman

NOMENCLATURE

Greta M. Kessenich

Since the beginning of the Society in 1903, extensive work began to correct the peony nomenclature. As the years have gone by, it was thought that all peony members knew that all peonies should be registered so that never again we would find ourselves with a nomenclature completely confused.

The following is a paragraph taken from the Address given by the first President in 1905 in Chicago:

"One of the crying needs of such an association as ours, is the surprisingly chaotic state into which the nomenclature of the peony has been allowed to degenerate, and if this association should do nothing else but straighten out in a passible manner the nomenclature of the peony, striking from the list duplicate or nearly duplicate and worthless varieties and render it possible for the trade to list fifty or sixty of the best sorts under names and descriptions that would render their identification certain and make possible extensive deals between different peony growers, insuring the buyer of getting exactly what he wants whenever he places an order, and then should disband, it will have accomplished one of the greatest benefits to floriculture in general and amply repay for all the effort put forth and expense incurred in its organization and maintenance. Realizing the importance of this question of nomenclature, a competent nomenclature committee was appointed and has already accomplished a long step towards straightening out the tangle which has been the source of annoyance and a bane to us all who have attempted to purchase peonies. I now refer to the extensive test plot at Cornell University which has been planted with upwards of a thousand varieties of peonies, all of which have been contributed by its members without one cent of expense being incurred by the Society. It is a foregone conclusion that this attempt to straighten out the peony nomenclature, undertaken under the auspices of Prof. John Craig of Cornell University, whose careful and efficient work performed in other lines is ample guarantee for the thoroughness with which this work will be done, will be productive of great results and will place the entire fraternity under obligations, not only to Prof. Craig but to Cornell University and, lastly but not least, to the American Peony Society itself."

Over the period of time, peonies have been registered and published in the Bulletins. In 1956, a checklist was completed by the Byron Gists, in the offices of Allen Wild, Sarcoxie, Missouri. It was never published in book form because of the printing costs. There was so much research and effort put into this particular compilation.

In 1976, it was published in the book, *History of Peonies And Their Originations* with a section of later registered peonies, and another section of hybridizers and the peonies they produced and introduced. This book was a mammoth step forward as it publicized the

peony cultivars in the peony world and to the horticultural circles. This research was another major undertaking as it was necessary to go back 20 years and find, as well as list, peonies correctly.

Listing the hybridizers and their peonies was difficult as many of the men and women had passed on, and it meant picking up fragmented names of peonies and assembling them in their proper places.

Now, ten years later, the book 1976 - 1986 has just been completed, corrections made, extensive research done, letters of inquiry regarding peonies were sent out, present-day hybridizers were contacted, etc. Since 1976 and until the present time, notes were taken, names corrected of questionable peonies, until at last we feel that our nomenclature is up-to-date and correct.

Now it is the duty of us all, to keep it accurate. We are a Society of people interested in the peony. Names of peonies are now demanded. Garden names only become recognized when registered. If names of peonies in catalogs are not recorded on our lists, it is your duty to ask about them.

Registering a plant is voluntary but your particular plant is so important to the peony world and yourself that the name should be recorded. 1986 catalogs are now being received—if peonies are listed and not registered, the time to register is now before they are disseminated. If a plant is worthy of selling, the buyer should be protected in receiving, from you, registered cultivars.

Work has been done on this peony nomenclature; now it is up to you. In Bulletin #1, Mr. A. H. Fewkes, Secretary, wrote an article of which the heading is: "What are you doing for the cause of the peony?" We all can answer that question very simply: "We will keep the nomenclature in order."



There is nothing to report on peonies but our new squash is coming along and I hope to have it in the ALL AMERICAN TRIALS in 1987. It is a regeneration of the original Kindred Squash which went into trade in 1969. All squash will degenerate in time as they grow close to other varieties and bees are not the most careful pollinators. This new one will be as nearly like the original Kindred, only smaller and less aggressive grower, but best of all, a much better flavor.

We both are rather well for our age. I will be 90 years this coming October. I guess I am the oldest man in town now.

From Ben Gilbertson, Kindred, North Dakota

* * * *

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

ANNUAL PEONY SHOW BRINGS THOUSANDS OF BEAUTEOUS BLOSSOMS

The frigid blasts of winter have melted into spring, summer is here and with it has come June—leafy June, in all its significance—flowers everywhere.

Throughout the universe, June has always been noted as the month of roses and brides. But it is partial also to all kinds of flowers, the peony in particular. That is why the annual show of the queen of flowers is held this month—it is at this time of year that they are at their most beautiful development—products of skilled cultivation and careful attention.

BEAUTIFUL APACHE PLAZA, ST. ANTHONY, MINNESOTA WILL BE ABLAZE WITH PEONIES OF ALL TYPES AND COLORS.

COME TO THIS NATIONAL EXHIBITION, JUNE 13-14-15.

Travel the countryside and everywhere the prodigality of June is in evidence. Parks and private gardens are ablaze with color. In shaded forest nooks rich foliage and the daintiest wild blossoms thrive side by side. They are found in the wilderness' open places kissed by the sun's warming rays, lending an enchantment to a vista that otherwise would be "merely a forest scene."

But don't stop there. Go into the weed-covered vacant lots of urban centers. There you will see dainty blossoms shooting their heads toward the home of heaven, struggling valiantly against the tangled mass of sturdier abominations trying with might and main to strangle the life out of them. It should not require more than a cursory glance at some of these places to convince Mr. Average Citizen of the possibility of transforming such wastelands into scenes of beauty that will be a credit to the community and those who make the transformation.

Undaunted, flowers grow by the roadside despite the dirt, dust and heat of traffic. And it is a forsaken farmstead that does not boast a flower garden of some sort, even though it be only a few geraniums, a pansy or two, or a lilac bush.

So it is, "Flowers Everywhere" in June. They fill the air with choice perfumes, their beautiful coloring generation after generation challenging the painter's best efforts as they dream and pray for the gift to reproduce them just as they are touched by the magic of nature.

Those who have not seen the modern peony cannot conceive the grandeur of its beauty compared with the old. If it is mass color that is wanted, or individual charm and beauty, the peony has it, the latter being especially noticeable in the new varieties. They have the shades, and blending of colors that beggar description.

Modern peonies offer both the single and double flowers. The

drawing power is said to rest in the fact that the amateur and semi-professional grower does not have to come into competition with the expert professional. There are classes for each. However, if the amateur desires, he may enter in competition with the professional. That has been done frequently, much to the credit of the amateur.

The possibilities of cold storage in staging a show are only partially realized, notwithstanding the practice has been in vogue for a number of years. The greatest advantage lies in the fact that one section of the country has no advantage over another because of weather, or sectional differences.

The greatest difficulty has been in knowing positively just how and when to cut for storage, with a view to bringing a proper opening of the bloom after storage, rather than just before. Temperatures vary from 33 to 38 degrees.

Whatever the facts about storage, it is known that for years splendid blooms of the "queen of flowers" have been seen at all of the shows in recent years. —Descriptive writing by Fred Fassett Bulletin #71

NEXT BEST THING TO THE REAL THING?

From Chicago Tribune

PEKING [UPI]—A Chinese soft drink manufacturer, using a "healthy" plant root as its special ingredient, is trying to beat Coca-Cola in a battle for the taste buds of 1-billion Chinese consumers, the China Daily reported.

The Chongqing Drink Factory began its search for a Coke look-alike in April, 1981, when the popularity of Coke sent its sales plummeting.

"Coke occupied an unrivaled position in the Chinese market," the paper quoted factory spokesman Ye Jianming as saying. "We were looking for some ingredient special to China, natural and healthy."

That special ingredient was the root of the peony.

After blending sugar and spices with the peony root, Tianfu-Cola, or "Abundance Cola," was born in 1982.

"Its similarity to Coca-Cola made Tianfu popular," the China Daily said.

Supplies of Tianfu-Cola were soon trailing demand, the paper said.

"You see Tianfu-Cola is only 4 years old," the paper quoted Ye, as saying, "but it is trying to compete with Coca-Cola, which will celebrate its centennial this coming May."

* * * * *

The spelling of the name "peony" is quite various. There are two correct ways, however. If we use the common popular English term, it should be spelled p-e-o-n-y, after the manner adopted by the American Peony Society. If we wish to use the Latin botanical name of the genus, it should be p-a-e-o-n-i-a.

A PROPOSED REVISION OF THE SHOW SCHEDULE — AN EXPLANATION OF THE CHART —

by Bill Seidl, Manitowoc, WI

Last year I proposed three different revisions of the show schedule. Altho none was adopted I feel there are so many virtues to the third revision that I am presenting it again, hopefully in a more understandable chart form. Each large solid dot in the chart represents a show class. By "reading" the chart, you can determine the show classification numbers for your entries without further reference to any other source. The current show schedule already classifies peonies by three means: type of plant, flower color, and flower form. The proposed schedule merely organizes this into a combined number-letter classification system using the keys below.

<u>FIVE BASIC TYPES</u>	<u>SEVEN COLORS, left digit</u>	<u>FIVE FLOWER FORMS</u>
1 - Lactiflora	00 White	A - Single
2 - Herbaceous hyb.	10's Yellow	B - Semi-double
3 - Ito hybrid	30's Salmon	C - Double
4 - Suffruticosa	40's Pink	M - Bomb
5 - Tree hybrid	50's Red	J - Japanese & Anemone
	70's Lavender	
	94 Blends	
	Shades:	
	0 Pale	
	2 Light	
	4 Medium (#2)	
	6 Dark	
	8 Deep	

By putting these digits and letters together in the order explained (type, color, form) you have a classification system easily memorized and readily expandable. Examples:

100A STARDUST	140C NORMA VOLZ	212A MOONRISE (#3)
100B MISS AMERICA	142C PILLOW TALK	314ABC YELLOW CROWN (#4)
100C MOTHER'S CHOICE	144C DINNER PLATE (#2)	514C ALICE HARDING
100M TOP BRASS	146C PRINCESS MARGARET	514A ROMAN GOLD
100J BU-TE	144A DAWN PINK	594A MARCHIONESS
200A ARCHANGEL	144B LIEBCHEN	550A BLACK PIRATE
200BC CAMELLIA (#1)	144M ANGEL CHEEKS	254A SABLE (#5)
400A ROCK'S VARIETY	144J WESTERNER	254BC RED CHARM
400B RENKAKU	244BC PAULA FAY	299J WALTER MAINS (#6)
400C FUSO-NO TSUKASA	444B YAE ZAKURA	474C KAMATA FUJI
234BC CORAL CHARM	544A LEDA	574C ZEPHYRUS (#7)

- *1 Actually 200C; the "BC" indicates doubles and semi-doubles compete against each other as one class thruout Division II.
- *2 There is no separate show class for medium shades, which is what the right-hand digit "4" was intended to mean. Therefore it is used to indicate "all shades" of a color. In the pink lactiflora classes medium shades of pink must be shown in either the 42 or 46 class.
- *3 Could be classed as 210 (cream) but still competes with 212 entries.
- *4 Actually 314B; "ABC" indicates all forms compete in same color class.
- *5 Actually 258A but, in Div. II, there is no show class for black-reds.
- *6 Actually 256J (dark red) but, in Div. II, all Japanese-form flowers compete in the "all (any) colors" class.
- *7 Probably 572C but all shades compete in class 574. This new color class added for tree hybrids includes CHORE (572A), ANNA MARIE (574A) and MYSTERY (572A), which otherwise compete as blends, 594.

Unused number groups allow for new colors; for example, the 20's could identify orange shades. To distinguish between single and three-bloom exhibits, write "-1" or "-3" after the class-number (or use exponents). For Court of Honor entries (Div. VI), precede the class-number with "6-". Thus, if MOTHER'S CHOICE was entered as a 1-bloom exhibit, a 3-bloom exhibit, and a C-H candidate, the three class numbers would be:

100C-1, 100C-3, and 6-100C.

CHART: PROPOSED REVISION

KEY TO FLOWER FORM:

A- SINGLE

B- SEMI-DOUBLE

C- DOUBLE

M- BOMB

J- JAPANESE

• = COURT OF HONOR CLASSES

		H 1				
		1 LACTIFLORA				
		A	B	C	M	J
00	WHITE	•	•	•	•	•
10	CREAM					
12	YELLOW, LIGHT					
14	YELLOW, MEDIUM & DARK (16)					
34	SALMON / CORAL, All shades					
40	BLUSH	INCLUDE WITH 100's		•	INCLUDE WITH 100's	
42	PINK, LIGHT			•		
44	PINK, All shades	•	•		•	•
46	PINK, DARK			•		
54	RED, LIGHT thru DARK	•	•	•	•	•
58	BLACK-RED, MAROON					
74	LAVENDER (70) } PURPLE (78) } All shades					
94	BLENDS					
98	ANY OTHER COLOR					
99	ALL COLORS	•	•	•	•	•

ION OF THE SHOW SCHEDULE

ERBACEOUS					TREE				
2 HYBRID				3 ITO			4 SUFF'A		
A	B	C	J	A	B	C	A	B	C
●	●—●						●	●	●
↓	↓	↓							
●	●—●								
				●—●—●					
●	●—●								
INCL. WITH 200'S									
●	●—●						●	●	●
●	●—●						●	●	●
↑	↑	↑					●	●	●
●							●	●	●
								●	●
				●—●—●					←●
●	●	●	●				←●		

DIVISION AND/OR CLASS

Current

1-bloom
and
3-bloom
exhibits
in one
container

TREE **HERBACEOUS**

LACTIFLORA
HERBACEOUS HYBRID
ITO HYBRID
SUFFRUTICOSA
TREE HYBRID

I

II

III

IV

V

I

COURT OF HONOR CANDIDATES

VI

VI

6-100C	6-199A	6-299A	6-399ABC
140C	199B	249B	
142C	199M	299C	499ABC
146C	199J	299J	514ABC
154C			598ABC

LARGER EXHIBITS:

VII

I

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25 cvs, ANY TYPE, color, or form .....
15 cvs, HERBACEOUS, any color or form .....
10 cvs, HERBACEOUS HYBRID, any color or form.
10 cvs, TREE, any color or form .....
  5 cvs, LACTIFLORA, Japanese form, any color.
  5 cvs, LACTIFLORA, single form, any color ..

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701
702
703
704
705
706

101
102
103
104
105
106

SPECIAL ENTRIES:

VIII

Various

Commercial Exhibit
 Visitor From Greatest Distance
 Multiple Bloom
 North Dakota Memorial Award
 Species, Herbaceous and Tree
 Seedlings, 3 blooms, 1 var.per container
 Seedlings, 1 bloom. Display only.
 New Varieties. Display only. Named and
 registered less than 5 years ago.

801
802
803
804, 805
8H, 8T
806
807
808

501
502
503
504, 505
I
401
403
402

NOVICE/AMATEUR (Combined). Classes below are the same as in the current Amateur Division except for two added classes (*).

IX

II, III

9-100C	199A	299
140C	199B	399 *
142C	199M	499
146C	199J	599 *
154C		ABC ↑

Classes at left are for 1-bloom exhibits. 3-bloom exhibits are the same except...

100C includes 140C,
144C combines 142C and 146C.

ARTISTIC CLASSES: 10-1, 10-2, 10-3, etc.

X

VII

Handling Exhibition Blooms

To have the finest exhibition blooms, it is presumed that plants have been cared for as directed. When the buds appear, go over the plants and select the buds that have the heaviest stems immediately below the buds. They produce the largest flowers.

Label, disbud, bag, cut, store as follows.

LABELING. The blooms should be properly labeled, preferably as soon as selected, certainly before or at the same time they are cut. Use wired wooden tree labels. Paper labels are not satisfactory. Write the name of the variety legibly, on both sides of the label. This will save many an overturned container. Fasten the label securely to the stem, just below the bloom.

DISBUDDING. Removing the side buds from a stem will make the center or terminal bud a larger, better flower. This should be done when they are about the size of a pea. Take the bud between the thumb and forefinger and give it a quick outward twist and it will break off with no damage to the stem. If the main stem is damaged in the process it may cause the center bud to die.

Usually the terminal bud will open before the side buds do which often open all at once.

So, to get a fine bouquet of blooms, remove the terminal bud and you will have from three to five, or more flowers only slightly smaller than the center bud would have made, all on the same stem. The blooming period is often prolonged for a particular plant for from one to two weeks by not disbudding.

BAGGING the blooms will prevent weather and insect damage and keep the delicately colored flowers from being faded out by bright sun light. This should be done a week or ten days before the buds will open, when the bud is dry. Use two pound grocery bags for the large, full, doubles and smaller ones for the singles, Japanese, and the smaller doubles. Transparent bags afford no protection from the sun. Slip the bag over the bloom and fasten with a rubber band, staples, or paper clip; never with a pin, as they are dangerous. Pull the bag up until it touches the bottom of the bud. This is important, as it prevents the bloom from being distorted and keeps the stem straight. For ventilation cut a small hole in each upper corner of the bag. This will keep the bloom from being cooked by the heat of the sun. Examine the bags after each rain and if water has collected in the sacks, remove them and resack when dry. Buds should never be sacked when wet as they may mold. After the bloom begins to open, it is hard to resack without damaging it, so if you

wish to examine the bloom, tear off the sack about halfway down leaving enough to hold the bloom in shape. Then pull another sack down over the first one, which may be done by holding the bloom encircled with one hand. The bags should not be removed, finally, until you are ready to use the flower.

To remove the bag, cut the rubber band or pull off the paper clip and tear off the sack. Do not pull it off.

CUTTING. You can tell when the bloom is ready to cut by the feel of it. Press down on the center of the bloom, through the sack, and, if it feels soft to the touch, like a marshmallow, then it is ready. Until the center softens up, the bloom will not open well when cut.

Cut-flower varieties may be cut when the first line of color appears and the first petals begin to unfold. Use a sharp knife and cut the stem about eighteen inches long, unless a longer stem is necessary. Leave at least the two bottom leaves on the stem uncut. Never cut more than two-thirds of the blooms on the plant. Remove all the leaves from the cut stem except the two upper ones. Plunge the stem into cold water up to the leaves. Take a pail of water along with you to the garden, so that there will be no delay in doing this. If the blooms have not been bagged previously, this should be done when they are cut. Make a hole in the bottom of the sack, stick the end of the stem into the bag and through the hole, then pull the bag over the bloom, leaves and all, until it touches the base of the bloom. Bagged blooms are not easily damaged by handling.

STORAGE. Store the blooms in a cool, dark place, if you do not have to keep longer than a few days. If they must be kept longer, they should be put in cold storage. The best storage temperature is about 33 or 34 degrees. It should not be over 40. If stored dry, be sure to keep the stems in deep water for at least two hours placing in storage. The leaves may be wetted down when placed in storage, but the buds must be kept dry. If wet, they should be wiped dry. Take them to storage as soon as possible after this soaking. The household refrigerator will serve if no better storage is available. If mold appears, wipe it off at once. Remove the blooms from storage from twelve to twenty-four hours before using, depending on the temperature at which stored, the colder the storage temperature the longer it will take the bloom to warm up and open properly. Take them from storage direct to the work room or ship, if that has to be done, as directed. Blooms that have been stored dry will usually take at least two days to fill with water.

Blooms that are slightly faded or just beginning to fade may often be revived by placing the stems in water as hot as the hand will bear, and leaving them there for an hour or two.

TRANSPORTING

If the blooms have to be transported any great distance, they should be packed with the bags on them, in well insulated cartons, tight enough to keep them from shifting about in transit. The cartons should be placed in the storage room the day before they are to be used and the packing done in this room. A good sized piece of dry ice, well wrapped and fastened securely in the center of the box, will keep the flowers in excellent condition for from twenty-four to thirty-six hours while in transit.

When the blooms reach the work room, place them in water at once, not forgetting to cut off about an inch of the stem. Arrange them alphabetically by color and type on the work table. Then remove the bags and allow them plenty of time to expand and fill with water. Always plan to take several times as many blooms as you will set up as you may need replacements. If the blooms are wide open, do not remove the bags until you are ready to display the blooms.

In taking replacements you also have a much better choice as some blooms may fall and others not be in prime condition. Always have two or three of every variety if possible. Choose flowers that you hope will be at their prime at judging time. Select the finest blooms for the Court of Honor classes, if you are allowed to enter them, and for the many specimen classes. You may have to change them later on. Set them up in their proper places on the show table. Then select the flowers for the collection classes. After you have set up all the flowers you wish to exhibit, keep going over them continually until judging time. Remove all that show signs of wilting and replace from your surplus. Swap from your collection classes to the specimen classes any that prove better than those first chosen. Be sure you have the correct number in every class and be sure they are properly labeled. This is important. Failure to do these simple things is a common fault. Be sure the containers are well filled with water and that you have plenty of them on hand. Try to get your exhibits set up well before judging time so you will have time for the final check which may prevent a failure to get an award. Watch your opponents and try to select flowers that are better than theirs. Do not display mediocre blooms, just to fill up. They do the show no good. Be especially careful not to show bad blooms of a new variety as they create unintentionally, a bad impression of the variety and may damage its future.

Do not show Japanese type blooms in a class calling for singles or vice-versa.

Make your entries, retire gracefully, do not criticize the judges and praise the other fellow's exhibits. Never mention the grand flowers you left back home in the garden. Take your winnings with modesty and your defeats with sportsmanship.

PEONIES FOR LANDSCAPE USE

Dot and Al Rogers, Sherwood, Oregon

Herbaceous Peonies

When most people think of peonies, they think of florist's peonies—huge, often fragrant bombs. These are almost always the *lactiflora* species, which originated in China many hundreds of years ago. The red "piney" that our pioneer great-grandmothers carried in their covered wagons was of the *officinalis* species—noted by their very lax stems.

Peony growing and hybridizing in America up to the 1930's was primarily for cut flowers. Since peonies can be cut in the bud stage, kept in cold storage and shipped to metropolitan centers, they formed the bulwark of the Memorial Day trade. Varieties were selected to grow on the basis of length of stem and size of individual flowers. This is why so many of the really handsome doubles go down in the garden during a heavy rain. After the flowers open, the stems simply can't support the weight swaying on top of them.

Developing peonies more suitable for landscape use is a long slow process. The peony breeding process usually takes eight years from sowing to first good bloom; 30 years to general wholesale availability.

It wasn't until the thirties that three American breeders, working separately, started crossing species. The first two, Glasscock and Auten, were primarily concerned with *lactiflora-officinalis* crosses and arrived at such great varieties as **Red Charm**—the most noted peony today.

Dr. Saunders, a chemistry professor, assembled every peony species available and attempted to cross them every possible way. He ended up with over 50 excellent hybrids. Some of these should form the backbone of any peony landscape use. Many of these are light and airy singles and semi-doubles in pale yellows, whites, rose, pink, salmon, coral and red shades.

These deciduous plants are a garden delight from the time their red shoots appear above ground in early spring through the blooming season. In climate area 8 where our nursery is located, we start the season in early April with the hybrid creamy yellow singles and end it in late June with the full *lactiflora* doubles. In more northern climates, the season is more compressed—mid May through June.

At season's end, dead blooms should be removed. Then the foliage of many varieties form a dense, green background for many of the later blooming flowers. Peony use varies from rock garden planting with the tiny *tenuifolia* species, to mixed perennial borders, hedging along walks or fences, or as stately specimen plants.

Peonies need at least half a day's sun, freedom from invading tree roots, air circulation and freedom from weeds. Just remember that,

depending on variety, they may take a space 3-4 feet in diameter and will stay put for generations. They are not invasive and do not spread out of their territory.

Planting should always be done in the fall unless container plants are available. The hole should be deep and well-prepared, with lots of organic material worked in plus bone meal. Plant with top eyes 1"-2" deep, water well and mulch the first winter.

Despite much old peony folklore, they do need regular fertilization. Starting the second year after planting, we recommend a low nitrogen/high phosphorous mixture such as 5-10-5.

The only commonly occurring disease under landscape growing conditions is botrytis in damp, cool years. We control this with a mixture of benlate and captan. Dead leaves should be cut to ground level in fall and burned.

There are four main types of peony flowers:

Singles — five or more petals arranged around a center of pollen-bearing stamens and carpels;

Japanese — similar to the singles but their stamens have been converted to heavier staminodes (devoid of pollen);

Semi-doubles — 4-8 layers of petals with a center of stamens showing; and

Doubles — many petals forming a dense ball generally hiding the center within the mass.

Colors and form may change from first year to second year. The colors of individual blossoms often get much lighter as the open flower matures; pinks soften to white, a lovely effect when many flowers, varying in age, are on one plant.

Some varieties have one flower per stem; others may have sprays of up to 5 or 6 per stem. If the side buds are removed when young, the terminal buds will become larger. It's a question of your preference for mass effect or specimen blooms.

There are no real standards or grades when you go to purchase peonies. In the garden store they are usually from 2-5 eyes in a little cardboard box—grown in crowded beds so that they can fit in these packages, kept in cold storage over winter and, for practical purposes, useless. The so-called standard is a 3-5 eye division with roots trimmed to 4"-5" in length. This close trimming will reduce nematodes, if present, and, according to some, will force fast root growth from the ends of the roots.

Our own experience differs somewhat. We believe that the more root food storage available, the better start the plant can make—particularly under adverse conditions. These bigger root divisions certainly cost more to ship and take up more storage room, however. At any rate, the fresher your roots are, the better; and I suggest you purchase them, where possible, directly from the dozen or so specialty nurseries.

Conventional wisdom always says divide peonies down to no more than 5 eyes with the inference that bigger divisions just won't flower properly. We routinely dig 3 and 4 year plants (a chore, I'll grant you) with all the root possible to get the 10-20 eyes off to a good start. They will bloom reasonably well the first year—and are fully established mature plants by the second year after planting.

Flying in the face of the experts has caused me concern, but our results have been excellent. We were interested to find out from the internationally-known Mitsura Saeki of Saeki Noen, Tokyo, Japan, that he digs 25+ eye divisions for his cut-flower growers. Don't try to do this with an old clump, however.

Herbaceous peonies can be balled and burlapped with reasonable success, even if in full bloom. They do well in 3-5 gallon cans and can be planted out anytime.

Tree Peonies

Many consider the tree peony the most exotic and spectacular plant available. Huge shimmering blooms, sometimes 10"-12" in diameter, have a texture like stiffened silk.

Tree peonies—the name more accurately should be shrub peony, since its wood branches last over the winter—have been known in China and Japan since before 600 A.D. Earliest Chinese writings depict the great care and thought applied to their culture. Brought to Japan early on, this flower has played a most important part in Japanese culture. It is still the principle flower shown in both their modern and ancient paintings.

The species *suffruticosa*, or Japanese tree peony, is an imposing, flowering shrub that, once established on its own roots, will live several lifetimes. It has the ability to regenerate itself from the crown if the top is destroyed, an obvious benefit after fire or wind damage, since the woody stems are somewhat brittle.

Tree peonies start growth early in spring along with daffodils. Their beauty and unique form deserve garden spots as specimen plants or in a small grouping close to walkways.

There are two main types of tree peonies—*suffruticosa* (the Japanese) is the earliest blooming. Its flowers may be single, semi-double, or double, in colors of white lavender, purple, pink or red. Darker flares are often seen at the base of the petals.

Lemoine in France and Saunders in America crossed the *suffruticosa* with the *lutea*—a brilliant, small, yellow-flowered species with the terrible habit of hanging down its flowers so that they are all but obscured by its foliage.

The French hybrid tree peonies are huge double flowers usually in shades of yellow and most fragrant. The stems bend and the flowers

are displayed downward, poor for landscaping but stunning when cut and floated in a shallow bowl.

The Saunders hybrids are singles and semi-doubles and introduce a dazzling array of colors from silvery yellow to lavender to deep clear reds, many showing a blend of several colors. These hybrids bloom about two weeks later than the Japanese and have wider leaves that often display bronze and purple fall coloring.

Tree peonies are very hardy and grow well in zones 3-8. The cultural requirements for tree peonies are the same as for the herbaceous.

Tree peonies are very difficult to propagate. Most are increased by grafting the tree peony scions onto herbaceous roots. There are only a handful of grafters in this country that are uniformly successful with takes, and the best of these are usually in the 30-50% success range. This is higher than we have had in our nursery.

It sometimes takes three years for the scion to develop its own roots. Meanwhile, the nurse root is furnishing all nutrients. It is also possible for the nurse root to put up a leaf shoot of its own. These are different enough from the desired leaves to recognize and cut off below ground level. They should be dug bare root in the fall and can be successfully shipped. Tree peonies grown from seed don't have the above two problems but may take 5 or 6 years before flowering and flowers may be of any and all colors and sizes.

Hundreds of thousands of 1 and 2 year grafts are imported from Japan each year, held months in cold storage, then further abused before sale at retail centers. When planted out, they have a very low rate of success. If planted directly out of cold storage, however, they do much better. The chances they will turn out to be the varieties marked is often poor.

When available from the few nurseries in this country as plants on their own roots, their success rate is high. These plants do well in pots and some landscapers pot up available grafts and grow out for 1 or 2 years before using.

At the time of final planting, check to see if the herbaceous nurse root is still below the slender roots of the tree peony. If so, snip off. Otherwise, they may grow to basketball size and occupy valuable root space.

Old tree peonies can be successfully moved. Do it bare root unless already potted and cut the top stems way back. You won't get much of a display before the second year, though.

HERBACEOUS PEONIES RECOMMENDED FOR LANDSCAPING

TYPE	COLOR	RECOMMENDATION	
Singles	Red	Laddie (E)	Flame (M)
		Your Majesty (M)	Tenuifolia (E)

White	Seraphim (E)	Double	Yellow	Prairie Moon (M)
	Campagna (E)		White	Miss America (L)
	Early Windflower (E)		Red	Big Ben (M)
	Athena (E)			Red Charm (M)
Yellow	Nova (E)			Diana Parks (M)
	Daystar (E)			Kansas (L)
	Sunlight (E)			Mons Martin Cuhuzac (L)
Pink	Roselette (E)		White	Moonstone (L)
	Great Lady (E)			Mother's Choice (L)
	Firelight (E)			Kelway's Glorious (L)
	Paula Fay (E)		Pink	Princess Margaret (L)
	Lovely Rose (E)			Raspberry Sundae (L)
	Cytheria (M)			Darling O'Mine (L)
	Seashell (L)			Martha Bulloch (L)
Japanese	Red	Mrs. W. Bancroft (M)		Mrs. F. D. R. (L)
	White	White Sands (L)		
	Pink	Glowing Candles (L)		
		Westerner (L)		
Semi-Double	Red	Alexander Woolcott (M)		E = Early season bloom
		Red Glory (M)		M = Mid season bloom
		Carina (M)		L = Late season bloom

Cutters should carry blooms high above their bush, so you may have a complete harvest without cutting leaves. Never cut over half of the flowers of a peony plant. For landscaping, with peonies, select a peony with flowers that are low on the bush but not nestled down among the leaves. We should use more dwarf varieties (as Dutch Dwarf) for edging walks and beds, on graves, and spotted here and there in low evergreen foundation beds. Peonies make a lovely hedge, when planted about two feet apart. A real showplace is a wide border of peonies, with blooming date from first to last of season, with some bulbs, daylilies, phlox and mums, intermingled.

—From Bill Krekler, Whittier, California

* * * *

*The 83rd Annual Meeting
81st Annual Exhibition of
The American Peony Society
June 13-14-15, 1986
Apache Plaza, 3800 Silver Lake Rd.
St. Anthony, Minnesota*

SELECTING PEONIES

W. G. Sindt, Afton, Minnesota (reprint)

The time to select new peonies for planting this fall is now. May and June are the months when selections should be made because it is the time when the plants are in bloom. Seeing the actual flower on a plant is by far the best means to help one make decisions on what varieties to obtain. If one cannot go to nurseries or gardens where the peonies are growing, the next best choice is to attend shows where the blooms can be seen and talk to the exhibitors to learn something about the characteristics of the plant. Failing either of these two methods, the method of peony catalogs can be pursued. The descriptions given are accurate but words and pictures are never as good as seeing the real growing plant.

In making selections, one should keep in mind the ultimate use or purpose desired for the plant. If the peonies are being selected primarily for landscape, the appearance of the plant becomes very important. The blooms are open two weeks but the shrub is there for six months. There is a great difference in plant habit. Some are very tall, some have coarse leaves, some turn color in the fall. By seeing the actual plant growing, a selection can be made of an attractive shrub with the flowers as a bonus. If the use is cut flowers for the home, one should look for the smaller sized doubles, singles and Japanese. For this purpose hybrids are very popular because of their different and brilliant colors. For show or exhibit one selects for perfection of bloom only. It matters little if the plant is not attractive or if the stems are too long to support the huge blooms. The show floor is the place to select this type. Look to the Court of Honor and blue ribbons at shows and talk to the successful exhibitors. Whatever the intended use, it is interesting to try a tree peony or two. Here one can get true yellow color which is not available in any of the other types yet.

Any discussion on selection of peonies should include some varieties that have special merit. Any list of varieties, which always omits many excellent ones, is the author's favorites which have done well for him. The varieties presented here fall into that category and while they are suggested for one of the three purposes mentioned before, they generally are acceptable in more than just one. *Vanity*, a blush Japanese, has very bright green shiny foliage and is a beautiful shrub during off-season. With *Wilford Johnson*, a full double deep pink, the top of the bush is covered with bloom, a beautiful shrub. *Fern leaf* (*P. tenuifolia*) has finely divided foliage that is unusual with very early bloom.

There is a single and double form of *P. tenuifolia* with the double a very showy plant early in the season. Most of the singles, Japanese and hybrids stand up well and are very acceptable for landscape work. Used as cut flowers in the home or in artistic exhibits, the color of hybrids is outstanding. *Cytharea*, a semi-double shell pink hybrid; *Flame*, a bright red hybrid; *Camellia*, a blush-white hybrid formed like

a camellia flower; **John Harvard**, a very dark red hybrid; **Krinkled White**, a white single; **Walter Faxon**, medium pink double; **Ruth Elizabeth**, a bright red medium-sized double; **John Gardener**, a red Japanese with gold edge are a few good choices for arrangers. Varieties selected for show should be large ones with good form that have the potential to be consistent winners. Some good varieties are: **Douglas Brand**, red double; **Red Charm**, full double red hybrid; **Princess Margaret**, dark pink double; **Pico**, white single; **Dinner Plate**, pink double; **Miss America**, semi-double white; **Frances Mains**, light pink double; **Kansas**, double light red; and many, many more. For a real stopper try a yellow tree peony such as **Age of Gold** or **Roman Gold**.

The preceding selection of varieties is very limited. The cost will be in the range of \$5.00 to \$15.00 with perhaps one exception. While this may seem high to some people, it compares very favorably with the cost of annual bedding plants. Packs of petunias now are about a dollar for eight or ten plants. Several packs are needed and they must be replaced each year, while the peony lasts a lifetime.

The national show at Apache Plaza will be an excellent opportunity to see good peonies.

When peonies are purchased, they should be obtained from a specialist, one who knows and grows hundreds of varieties. A peony plant lasts a lifetime so select carefully.

I GREW UP WITH PEONIES

The peonies that I remember most fondly are from my childhood. I grew up in an old pre-Civil War brick house, built in 1840. Outside the dining window was a peony bed of **FELIX CROUSSE**, **MONS JULES ELIE**, **KARL ROSENFELD**, **LE CYGNE**, **SARAH BERNHARDT**, **MINUET**, etc. The peonies that had the front walk, my father and mother had the gardener plant them. They were mostly very old varieties: **FESTIVA MAXIMA**, **EDULIS SUPERBA**, and another pink that I cannot remember the name of. She died in 1907, and I still have some of those peonies.

One of the most beautiful peonies that we had was a **Mons Jules** seedling. Dad went fishing in northern Minnesota and stopped at Brands Peony Farm on the way back, to buy peonies. One peony was a darker rose and larger than **Jules Elie** and perfect, as I remember.

I am very fond of the Lins peonies and have as many as I could find. Perhaps I have lost some as my peony beds are in a deplorable condition. Seedling trees have grown up—honeysuckle, multi-flora rose, and *enonymus*, which is about the worst you can find.

I retired March 14, so this year the place was remade, with the help of a neighbor with a chain saw.

I have some tree peony seed if anyone would like them. The white double is **GODAISHU**; also seed from a single lavender with a purple flare. The tag is lost, but I think it is **MYSTERY**. There are seeds

from a full double, very fragrant, red, a light almost incandescent color that catches the eye as far as you can see it—very floriferous, too, with 22 blooms this year.

This is an early season for us as my bleeding heart started to bloom in March. I love the peonies and daffodils. Planted some Irish daffodils last fall that are lovely and have some coming from Australia and New Zealand. Also have an Irish Setter, that I love and show. In my retirement, I will be busy all the time.

—Elnora Short, Independence, Missouri

HISTORY OF THE PEONY IN AMERICA

Written by J. Eliot Coit, Cornell University, November 1908
The College of Agriculture; Bulletin #259

The rise in popularity of the herbaceous peony in America was contemporaneous with that in Europe. We do not know just when the first introduction of herbaceous peonies took place, but McMahon in 1806, in a list of perennials suited to the open ground in the Middle and Eastern States, mentions five kinds: *P. officinalis*, *albiflora*, *laciniata*, *hybrida* and *tenuifolia*; and we infer from this that these existed in America at that date.

Prince, in 1828, in his "*Treatise on Horticulture*," in speaking of peonies says: "Anticipating that a similar taste would be evinced in this country, the author has by a great exertion obtained every possible kind from Europe, and also a number from China." He describes at length *Whitleyi*, *Humei*, and *Fragrans*. He also states that at that time (1828) his collection contained forty varieties, combining a great diversity of shades and colors. We find also that in 1862, at great expense, he obtained some twenty varieties of tree peonies from European gardens and introduced them at Flushing, Long Island. He further says: "I have also originated from seeds during the past fifteen years twenty-two most gorgeous varieties, whose flowers are of the largest size, and comprising white, roseate, crimson, lilac, purple, and variegated shades" (Prince, 1862).

Hovey in 1836 states that he had never seen but three varieties of tree peonies in America, with the exception of a seedling raised by Prince. He says that he has no way of knowing just when the first tree peonies were introduced into America, but thinks it must have been about 1820. It is certain that a plant of *P. moutan* var. *papaveracea* was imported from England in 1826 by Mr. William Lathe of Cambridgeport. Later this plant passed into the possession of J. P. Cushing, Belmont Place, Watertown, where it attracted considerable attention. In 1836, Col. Perkins of Brookline, Mass., owned a tree peony which he had imported direct from China. Hovey thinks that this was the *P. moutan Rawseii* of Sabine. At this same date (1836) Mr. Wilder of Hawthorne Grove, Dorchester, possessed several of the latest seedlings from France. These were all tree peonies.

In 1856, Mr. H. A. Terry of Crescent, Iowa, obtained from Prince at Flushing, L. I., some thirty varieties of *P. albiflora*, including Humei, Pottsi, Reevesi, Fragrans, Festiva Maxima, Lutetiana, Edulis Superba, Plenissima rosea, Queen Victoria, etc. Many of these produced seed freely, and Mr. Terry soon had thousands of seedlings under way. He dealt only with the herbaceous peonies, and has done a great deal to advance the culture of peonies in the West. Some of his best productions are: Grover Cleveland, Carrie, Esther, La Reine, Mrs. Pleas, Maud Hutchinson, and Morning Star. "I am now in my eightieth year," writes Mr. Terry, "and do not know how long I will continue to grow peonies, but I want to be surrounded by them as long as I live. They are like my children, very dear to me" (Watson, 1904).

John Richardson of Dorchester, Mass., an enthusiastic lover of ornamental plants, has done much to advance the interest of the peony in America. Records of peonies in his garden go back to 1857, when some fragrant forms were recorded; but how much longer he had been growing them is not known. From 1857 to the time of his death was thirty years, and in that period, at least, he was actively growing seedlings. Some of the posthumous seedlings were named, described and distributed by his nephew, Dr. R. T. Jackson, of Cambridge, Mass. His peonies are unique in that they are mostly all late, double varieties of remarkable vigor and height. A good type of his production is *Rubra Superba*, which usually grows very strong and tall, and may easily be picked out at a glance in a large collection at an exhibition. Most of his seedlings are light in color, with the one exception of *Rubra Superba* (Jackson, 1904).

About 1880, Mrs. Sarah A. Pleas, of Spiceland, Indiana, planted a lot of seeds from a variety of *P. albiflora*, and from this planting a large number of varieties were named by her and sold more or less widely over the United States. As Mrs. Pleas did not register many of her original names of seedlings in the public print, many of her varieties were put out by various growers under different names. Her *Golden Wedding* is a good example of these.

Of late years, Mr. C. S. Harrison, of York, Nebraska, and other western nurserymen have done much to popularize the peony in the West, where it is peculiarly successful.

Some of the persons whose names have been more or less connected with the introduction and development of the peony in America

William R. Prince, Flushing, L. I.; M. P. Wilder, Boston, Mass.; H. A. Terry, Crescent, Iowa; John Richardson, Dorchester, Mass.; R. T. Jackson, Cambridge, Mass.; C. M. Hovey, Cambridge, Mass.; George Ellwanger, Rochester, N. Y.; William A. Peterson, Chicago, Ill.; George C. Watson, Philadelphia, Pa.; Patrick Barry, Rochester, N. Y.; T. C. Thurlow, West Newbury, Mass.; Sarah A. Pleas, Spiceland, Ind.; C. S. Harrison, York, Neb.; George Hollis, South Weymouth, Mass.; C. W. Ward, Queens, L. I.; A. H. Fewkes, Newton Highlands, Mass.; J. F. Rosenfield, West Point, Neb.; E. J. Shaylor, Wellesley Hills, Mass.

PLANTING PEONY ROOTS

by Rev. Edward K. Thurlow, Sheffield, Mass.

Bulletin #43, September 1930

This subject seems to be of enough interest, and of enough difference of opinion, to appear every little while in the Bulletins. Dr. Beeson's article, in the Dec. 1929 issue, prompts me to add to the list, particularly because he thinks that the "two-foot-hole" theory ought to be "debunked." Perhaps my own experience in the last two or three years may be of interest and of help.

I cannot remember a time when the division and planting of peonies had not become a familiar sight at Cherry Hill. It was probably in 1882 or 1883 (I was born in the latter year, and my memory is thus only of what my father told me) that my father secured from John C. Hovey, one plant each of Richardson's *Dorchester*, *Grandiflora*, *Norfolk*, *Perfection*, and *Rubra superba*; and these were by no means the first peonies he had grown. (See note at end of article.)

From the time when I was old enough to be of any help in the peony fields, I have had a share in practically every phase of peony culture. But the planting was always for commercial purposes, and not for permanence. It was therefore on so large a scale that deep preparation of the soil was not feasible. Indeed, as others have said in previous Bulletins, the commercial grower does not desire or need a planting soil deeply dug over. His roots are to be sold, preferably one or two years after division. He does not desire to have the plant send out roots that go deeply into the soil. He desires a crown supplied with a well-balanced system of new, vigorous roots, so as to provide the purchaser with a plant which may send its roots out and down, on all sides. The dealer needs a fairly deep, rich top-soil, which will produce such a plant. The nature of the sub-soil, I think, does not matter much, provided it be not gravelly, and not so stiff as to prevent good drainage. Clayish soil holds the moisture, and hence the dissolved food on which the plant is to live. Thus the plant is not obliged to go deeply, to secure what it needs. Whether clay soil, in itself, contains any element necessary to the peony, which other soils do not have, is a question some horticultural chemist ought to answer for us.

Not until recently have I been in a position to experiment with a deeply-prepared bed for peony-planting. In 1925, I planted (in the usual way) a number of divisions, in a soil that is basically sand, of a fine, even texture, without stones. In 1927, my parish secured another rectory, and offered the former one for sale. Lest a purchaser might desire to take possession before transplanting-time, I moved the plants, about the first of May, 1927, to a neighbor's garden, moving as much dirt as I could dig up with the clump. The stems were six or eight inches high. Some of the flower-buds were visible; but the plants bloomed that June, apparently as if nothing had happened. In the fall I moved them again, to the only place then available on the new rectory grounds—newly-plowed land which had been somewhat neglected sod for many years. In many places the top-soil was only about four inches deep. Again I moved the clumps with all the dirt I could.

In the summer of 1928 I began the permanent bed. I dug a trench five feet wide and two feet deep, discarding the sub-soil. Into this I put plant food of every description that was at hand, except fresh barnyard manure: partly rotted weeds, leaf-mould, kitchen garbage, wood ashes, sods, peat-muck (somewhat sweetened by exposure and aeration), lime, and barnyard scrapings. These were spread in layers, sandwiched with top soil, and thoroughly trampled down. In addition to this, at planting time I put a generous supply of sheep manure and bone-meal about six inches below each clump, mixed thoroughly with soil. Only top soil was used to anchor the plant and fill the hole.

The trench was filled two or three weeks before planting time. By means of a continuous stream of water, from the hose, for two or three days, the trench was "settled" as if after several months of rain,

The roots, which were very large divisions, but not clumps, were planted so that the top buds were scarcely an inch below the surface. Over each plant a thick sod, about fifteen inches square, was inverted. This, I have found, effectually prevents "heaving" the first winter. (No protection at all is given after this.) It is not practicable on a large scale, so that a commercial grower must mulch. But it does permit shallow planting, and thus does away with the greatest danger to the beginner. In the spring I found that one or two had been planted so near the surface that when the spring rain came, after the sod was removed, the top of the crown showed. This necessitated early support for the stalks, and extra earth over the crown. But the plants, I find, have remedied this error by forming the next year's buds lower down, at the level the plant needs, for its best growth. (Had the plant been set too deeply, the buds would likewise have been formed at the proper level. But they would in that case have been on the old stems, above the crown, so that the plant would have been obliged to transform these stem-bases into crown-root. The energy diverted to this, and the scantiness of connection between roots and new stems, would weaken the plant, and prevent its flowering, while the foliage would be half-starved and scanty.)

Last summer was exceptionally dry. We had almost no rain, from early June until after the middle of September. The shortage of water supply prevented the use of the hose, all summer. The peonies not yet transplanted wilted to the ground, and turned yellow, in August, though they came back, after the September rains. The ones transplanted in the specially filled trench showed scarcely any signs of wilt, and remained green until the stems had been split by hard frosts. This spring the buds showed almost as soon as those of the officinalis; and at that time the ground for about fifteen inches around the crowns was full of small new rootlets.

This year's blooms were smaller than they should have been, and had less substance, many of them wilting quickly, especially on the exhibition table. There was plenty of rain this spring and the plants not yet transplanted were not much inferior in appearance, to the casual eye, than those in the deep soil. It seemed to me, however, that on the

whole the latter have done better. All of them had a liberal top dressing last fall, of bone-meal; and this spring, of a good "potato fertilizer," and in some cases some super-phosphate. Of course, they responded. But had I been able to water them last summer I am sure the results would have been better. A neighbor, who had fewer plants, nearer his house, was able to water them. His plants were divisions cut from the ones I transplanted. His blooms this year were much superior to mine. Two or three years from now, a comparison ought to be more encouraging, when my plants have made use of the deeper soil, and the stored-up food in it; at any rate, I hope so. In spite of the great amount of work such soil-preparation involves (I did all the work myself), I have filled a much larger trench for transplanting this year.

NOTE: It was only by persistence that my father secured the opportunity to interview Mr. Richardson about his peonies; and only after much persuasion did the old gentleman consent to instruct Mr. Hovey (who had charge of them) to sell the plants. I do not know the price paid. By 1893 these five divisions had been increased to two thousand. In that year T. C. Thurlow issued a four-page catalog, which was, I think, the first in America exclusively devoted to peonies. It was, at any rate, the first time these Richardson varieties were offered for sale to the general public, in a printed catalog.

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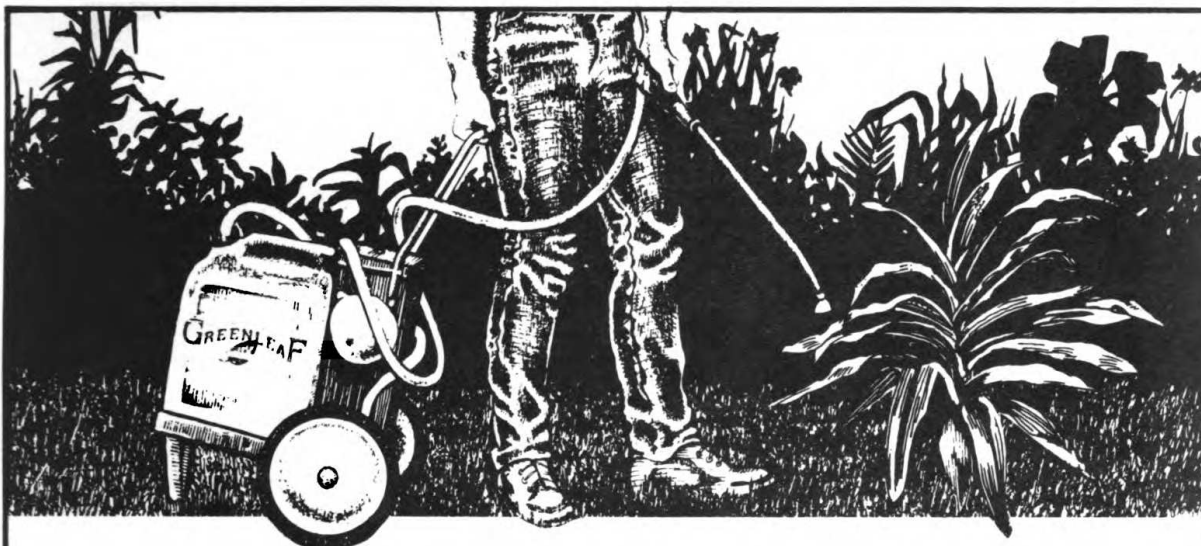
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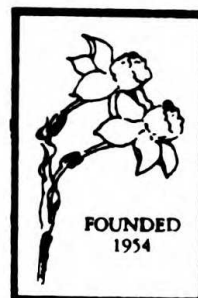
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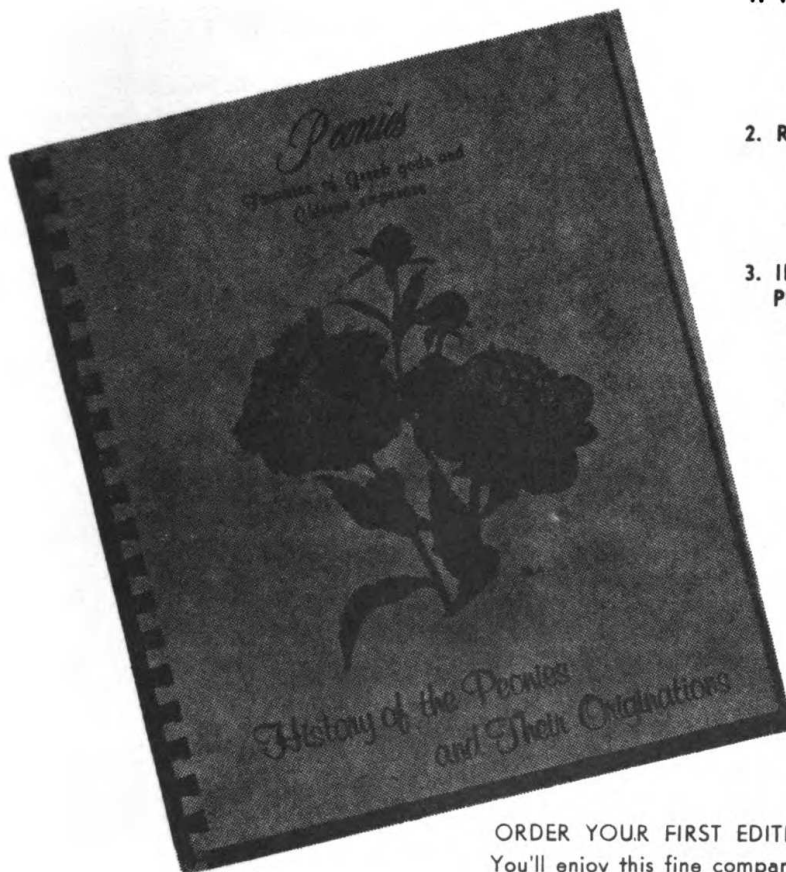
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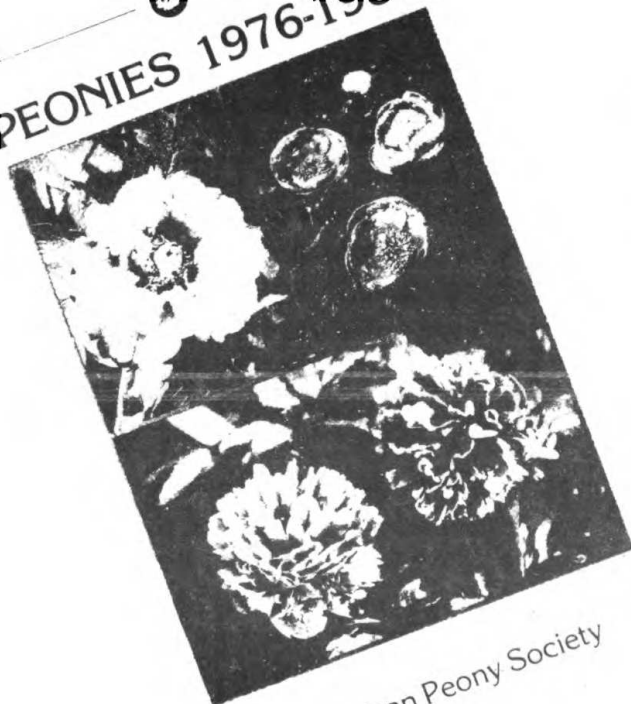
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