

Life Sci



DECEMBER 2000

NO. 316

The American Peony Society Bulletin



Red Grace

A very large deep red double hybrid. Petals so tightly packed it is almost a complete globe. Early. Stems adequate.

—Photo by Vernon Kidd, New York

Announcing

The limited
publication of
a "TABLE TOP"
edition devoted
exclusively to

AMERICAN

**TREE
PEONIES**



Appended cultural notes cover:

- *Tree Peony history*
- *Planting and general culture*
- *Propagation by root grafting of scions*
- *Pruning, fertilization, winter protection, etc.*

Compiled and edited by
Greta M. Kessenich;
photos by Roy Klehm
and David Reath



63 BRILLIANT FULL COLOR PHOTOS

True, tree peonies with their 1400 year history are not native to America. But a class of exceptional HYBRID tree peonies are. Efforts by seven world renowned American hybridizers* who successfully cross-pollinated *P. Lutea* with *P. Suffructicosa* are covered in this limited edition. Photos are razor sharp in detail and reflect all the brilliance and subtle hues of these native Americans, including the new generation of ITOH's.

* *A.P. Saunders, William Gratwick, Nassos Daphnis, David Reath, Toichi Domoto, Don Hollingsworth and Roger Anderson*

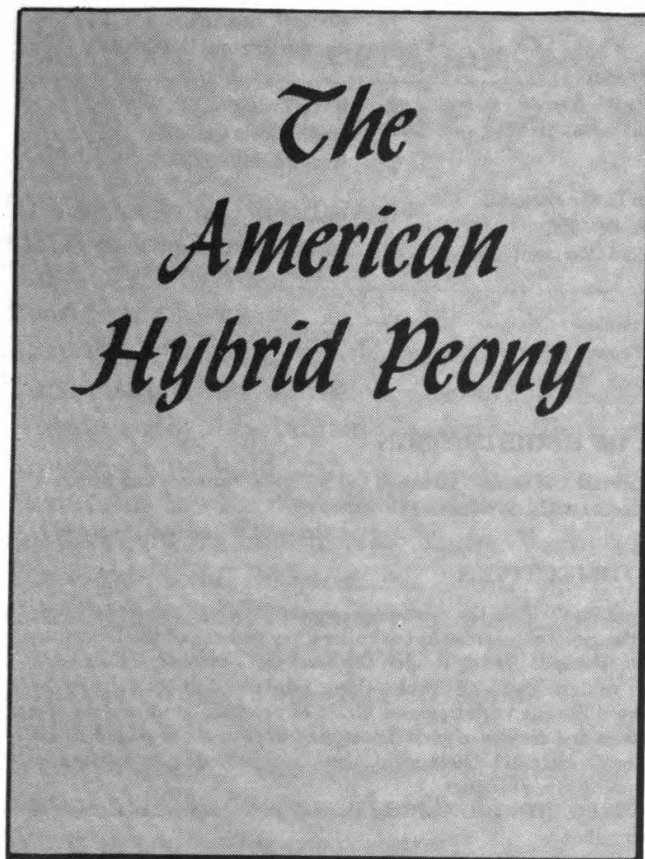
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*Devised and
Compiled by
Greta M. Kessenich,
Don Hollingsworth
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Bibliography*

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DEPT. OF REGISTRATION

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

Greta M. Kessenich, Secretary

OBJECTIVES

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

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

MEMBERSHIP

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

Single Annual	\$7.50	Family Triennial.....	27.50
Single Triennial	20.00	Life Membership	300.00
Family Annual	10.00	Commercial membership	25.00

Family membership, any two related members in same householdOne Bulletin

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

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



AMERICAN Peony Society Bulletin



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

Presidents Message

The American Peony Society is fast approaching its 100-year anniversary. Let us look back and see what progress the Society has made during the past century.

In reading the book edited by James Boyd, Peonies, The Manual of the American Peony Society, 1928, the American Peony Society, Mount Pleasant Press, J. Horace McFarland Company, Harrisburg, PA, I learned a number of interesting facts.

The American Peony Society was established in 1902 with 38 firms or individuals as members. At the time of the first annual meeting in Detroit in 1903, it was voted that the Society be incorporated under the laws of the State of New York.

The first recorded exhibition was held in New York on June 8 and 9, 1904. There were about seven exhibitors, but no names were given for the flowers that were shown. The main purpose for establishing the American Peony Society was to create proper peony nomenclature and to bring order out of the confusion which then reigned among the names of the peonies in commerce.

Cornell University of Ithaca, New York, was the home of the first peony collection which included about 3500 roots that were under observation. One of the first things that was soon apparent was the confusion among the variety named **Edulis Superba**. It was sent to Cornell under 23 different names, and sometimes under three or four names from the same nursery. Growers would buy roots and supply their own names which added to the confusion of identifying plants.

A great deal of work was done in the early years of the Society by well-educated individuals who took it upon themselves to create proper nomenclature for the peony flower. Today, in addition to our current registrations and published check lists, we have catalogs and colored photos to guide us in our purchase of new varieties. Also we can attend the annual exhibition of peonies where the exhibitors show their best blooms, and we can visit the gardens of various growers during bloom season. We no longer have to purchase a peony on description alone.

Best wishes to all for a happy holiday season.

Floyd E. Kimball



ANNUAL CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION 2002

Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Madison, Wisconsin

June 8-9

—Roger Anderson and Roy Klehm

CONVENTION & EXHIBITION

JUNE 8, 9, 10, 2001

American Peony Society and the
Canadian Peony Society (Ontario Region)

Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

The Canadian Peony Society
John Simkins, President

The Society was formed in March 1998 by John Simkins with a push and much administrative help from Len Monkman. Harry McGee in London took on the Constitution to ensure we had a National Society. The Society recognizes five regions in Canada, Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies and Pacific. Each region elects a Director from these five plus a President and Vice President who are elected by the total membership make up the Board of Directors. So far we have had one Board meeting by conference phones. Our membership of 320 including a number of groups is distributed in the regions with the highest number in Ontario. We encourage each region to set up satellite societies even as part of local Horticultural Societies. The prairies have one in Regina and Ontario has one in Hamilton at the R.B.G. which is also the main Society address.

We have a quarterly newsletter, a web-site, www.peony.ca and a chat group www.canpeony@egroups.com. Our members have collected information on Canadian breeders and have found some of their plants. There is an area for them in the collection at R.B.G. Some of our members are working with local people in London to put a collection of A.P.Saunders peonies in London, his home town. Several members have helped their local horticultural Societies to plant peony beds in public parks. We have had shows each year at the R.B.G. and in 2000 at the Woodstock Museum. In 2001 the national show is slated for Ottawa in mid-June. It has been a busy period with many people involved but we are gradually pulling the peony people of Canada together and introducing peonies to the others.

Customs and Plant Inspection

There is no requirement for a permit to bring cut flowers to Canada for the show. Peonies left are given to Hospital or nursing home patients. I will advise the Federal Customs and Excise Departments of the dates of the show and they may advise the relevant entry points.

Shipping Plants for the Show

There is a plant cooler at the R.B.G. so with advance notice plants may be shipped there and will be placed in the coolers. The volunteers for the show are able to place flowers in the show if they are labeled and in satisfactory shape. Advise the Show Chair John Simkins if you wish to place a few special flowers in the show but cannot do it yourself. His phone number is (905) 845-8380, e-mail: jsimkins@tap.net. The address of the Royal Botanical Gardens is 680 Plains Road, Burlington, ON L7T 4H4 Canada. Put on the parcel "Flowers for the peony show, please put in the cooler."



WELCOME TO ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS ONTARIO, CANADA

It is my pleasure on behalf of the Board, staff and volunteers of Canada's Royal Botanical Gardens to welcome members of the American Peony Society to the 97th Annual Meeting and 94th Annual Exhibition to be hosted at RBG Centre on June 8-10, 2001.

Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) is the largest botanical garden in Canada comprising over 2,700 acres wrapping the northwest shore of Lake Ontario. Initiated in 1929 with the construction of the Rock Garden, RBG now features 60 documented collections of approximately 40,000 plants displayed in five major garden areas, and protected woodlands and wetlands which are served by almost 18 miles of marked and interpreted nature trails.

At the time of your visit, the spring blooms will have passed their pea, but you may still see the last of the late lilacs in the internally noted Lilac Dell, located in the Arboretum. The Rock Garden, our original garden area which was reconstructed in the 1930s from a former gravel pit, will feature spectacular annual plantings in a dramatic setting.

In Hendrie Park, the garden area adjacent to RBG Centre, you will have the opportunity to enjoy the early blooms from more than 3,000 rose bushes. The rose collection features old garden and modern shrub roses, as well as hybrid teas, floribundas and large-flowered climbers. Other attractions in this area include a scented garden, a thyme garden, a clematis collection, home demonstration borders, an introduction to the world of botany, and a new medicinal plant garden. You will also have the opportunity to view renovations to the woodland garden which make it more accessible to visitors.

The horticultural highlight during your visit in mid-June will be the Laking Garden, which honours RBG's Director Emeritas, Dr. Leslie Laking. New perennial borders are a valued resource of plant selection and design ideas for gardeners, and over 100,000 tall bearded iris (featuring over 500 named cultivars) dazzle the senses with wild colour combinations. With a new monocot collection and an expanded Hosta Walk, the Laking Garden provides a spectacular setting for RBG's collection of more than 450 herbaceous and tree peonies. We hope we will be able to share with you the experience of some of our new accessions of *Paeonia suffruticosa* from mainland China.

At Royal Botanical Gardens, we are also very proud of the emphasis we are giving to our nature sanctuaries. As part of an ambitious project to rehabilitate Hamilton Harbour, RBG has been leading a cutting-edge restoration of marshland and aquatic habitat in the wester tip of Lake Ontario known as Cootes Paradise. Rare plants including hickory and sassafras trees thrive in the nature lands, and despite our location in the most densely populated region of Canada, white-tailed deer, beavers and coyotes roam our lush forests, rolling meadows and vibrant wetlands. We look forward to welcoming you to Canada's Royal Botanical Gardens.

Sharilyn J. Ingram, Director



Letters

We were on a tour of France, London and the English Countryside from May 29th through June 9th.

We visited the Palace of Versailles. Palace was that of the Sun King Louis XIV (the gardens and fountains). After touring the palace the 6 of us were weary and ready to find a place to sit down and have a cup of tea. We left the Palace grounds, crossed a street, a narrow parkway and another street.

We spotted this small hotel dining room—not sure if it was open we hesitated entering. A very kind man said it was open and asked us to come in. What a surprise for me as there were Peony blossoms everywhere on counters and tables. The most fragrant was that of a white with the red markings, **Festiva Maxima**. The deep pink I did not know or the larger bouquet of paler pink that was displayed in a large cut glass vase on a beautiful round table.

What I did not realize was the fact that France and farther north than our gardens in southern Missouri and of course would have Peonies in bloom.

We enjoyed hot tea and cakes while there. The gentleman was very pleasant in explaining where his Peony garden was at his farm. I thought he might have a large garden at the back of the hotel—but no. He did share the information that he would be in New York about Thanksgiving—his brother has a five star restaurant in New York City.

In the English countryside about all the homes have small to large English Gardens. It was interesting to look out the bus windows at these lovely gardens. Most all had a large bomb type red Peony, and lovely pinks. At the Chester Hotel, Bourton-on-the-Water, the breakfast dinning room looked out into a lovely garden—another **Festiva Maxima** greeted us each morning.

I believe that it was somewhere near Bath, England that we were in a farmers market—saw Peonies planted in about 6” pots and with large terminal buds. Wanted to share this info with you.

—from Gene Wild, Sarcoxie, Missouri

Peonies at the Fair in August

by Jack Nordick, Ortonville, MN 56278

In all of the years I have had a garden, I had never taken any exhibits to a fair until just a few years ago. I found it to be quite a lot of fun, even if it was a lot of work. After winning a few ribbons I thought it would be terrific if I could exhibit some of my prize Peonies at the local fair. But the Peonies bloom the first two weeks of June, and the Big Stone County Fair isn't held until the last weekend in July. Could such a thing be possible?

I had read about keeping Peonies in cold storage but wasn't sure how to go about it. Last year I tried two different ways, but neither was very successful. I had Peonies in bouquets at the fair in 1999, but they did not open well and were not very impressive. This year, how-

ever, I learned of a different way to store the peonies that was very successful. I came home from the fair this year with two blue ribbons won on bouquets that prominently featured Peonies. Since I found the method so successful, I want to share it with the reader of the Bulletin.

Choose Peony buds that are not quite open. For best color, cover them with small paper bags until they are cut. Make a hole in one corner so they will be able to vent heat. The bags are not really necessary, but will help to preserve the best possible blooms. When the buds begin to soften, and are about the texture of marshmallows, cut the stems and remove all of the leaves. It is ok if one or two petals are beginning to curl. Let them soak in warm water for a short time to soak up as much moisture as possible. Dip the ends of the stems in melted wax. Paraffin used for canning does nicely. I dipped them twice, once just on the very bottom and the second time a couple of inches up the stem.

Wrap the stems in wet newspaper. Wrap just the stems, and not the buds. Buds will discolor if they are touching the newspaper. A group of 10-20 stems can be placed in a single bunch for wrapping. Place the wrapped stems in a large plastic bag and seal. Put the bag in a cold refrigerator; 34-36 degrees is ideal. They will keep at any temperature under 40 but the colder the better, so long as they do not freeze.

When ready to use, remove the stems, cut an inch off of the bottom of the stems and place them in warm water. The flowers will open right before your eyes. Other instructions I have seen say that they do not retain their fragrance, but I found it to be different. The fragrance in the car with the buckets of peonies on their way to the fair was almost overpowering. The only drawback that I found was the the life in the vase was shorter than when cut fresh.

Early flowering varieties work best and singles better than the full doubles. The late varieties like **Elsa Sass** refused to open at all. Others, **Sarah Bernhardt** included, were somewhat slow, but **Festiva Maxima** and **Mons Jules Ellie** were especially amazing.

As my collection of Peonies grows and the size of the bushes increase, I expect to have more buds in the fridge for later forcing. They should keep for three months!

One of the criticisms of Peonies is their short garden life. But just think, by keeping buds in cold storage we can enjoy the beauty of Peonies from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Perhaps, someday I will even be able to see my Peonies exhibited at the Minnesota State Fair.

I spend a good day in June visiting several peony gardens. Sometimes seeing a flower in the fresh just makes a much different impression than pictures and descriptions. The divisions I ordered this spring are mostly still in delivery, and already I have a long list for next year. I doubt I will tire of this for at least a hundred years.

I also planted several rows of seed. The new peony bed that I dug last summer in the middle of an alfalfa pasture has turned out to be nearly weed free and a very good place to plant the seeds. The extra seeds I had I sent on to Dr. Crossley for distribution. I hope others will get as much satisfaction out of starting plants from seeds as I have.

—**Jack Nordick**, Ortonville, MN 56278

PEONIES GROWING ON FIRE ISLAND, WITH A “SANDY BARRIER BEACH FACING THE ATLANTIC”

Vernon Kidd, New York

Last evening while listening to the televised Great Performance Series' initial program at the Lincoln Center, I noticed the Crown Princess moving out to sea from the Hudson River Pier. Earlier that morning, she had docked in a gray overcast of rain clouds, followed by sunshine and a lovely day, which had ended with a wind-driven rain and sheets of lightening illuminating Manhattan. The fast-moving thunder storm was backdrop to this glittering “city at sea,” aglow with hundreds of lights. As she passed over the horizon of vision, it called to memory the day she made her official debut in 1990, christened by Sophia Loren at a Brooklyn pier.

An invited luncheon guest for the christening, I was startled by the realization that what had seemed only yesterday happened in fact 10 years ago! We had enjoyed a gourmet lunch while the 70,000-ton, all-white ship (inspired by the shape of a dolphin) moved down the East River around the tip of Manhattan, past the Statue of Liberty, to dock at the Hudson Passenger Ship Terminal, where she began taking on passengers for her maiden cruise.

As the song goes, “Another autumn, I’ve felt the chill before, but every autumn, I feel it more and more,” so it is for my garden, a time of both closure and renewal. Practically inundated with apples and pears, weekends have been filled with extra work picking fruit, cutting back the herbaceous peonies in preparation for winter, the general clean up and planting new arrivals, which, in my case, entails *moving* something in order to find a happy location for the newcomers, then realizing the plant being moved has multiplied, requiring still more sites for them to store energy and rehearse their spring curtain-calls.

A stunning division (five eyes the size of my middle finger) of this year’s Grand Champion “**Lemon Chiffon**” arrived from Reath’s Vulcan, Michigan, Nursery. The roots, fat and healthy, made me both grateful and envious of their growing medium. I gave “**Vivid Rose**” (planted over ten years ago, of which I have several divisions) to a neighbor in order to make room for the new double hybrid’s arrival, and replaced the soil in the planting hole with a 40-pound bag of top-soil mixed with some potting soil and a small amount of low-nitrogen fertilizer. Planted near another peony originated by Dr. David L. Reath, the blazing beauty “**Mackinac Grand**” is a garden beacon, drawing all to its vibrant red glow.

The Chinese tree peony, “**Coral Terrace**,” from Cricket Hill Garden in Connecticut, arrived in time for our next to last weekend at the Island for the winter. I dug up a healthy “**Sunny Girl**,” from Chris Laning, which should have been planted in a front border to begin with, and discovered three distinct divisions with five or more eyes, the size of which are associated in my mind with peony specialists and hybridizers (but these were grown in my own garden). I almost gave one away, but selfishly “found” spaces for all three in various border locations.

This particular **"Sunny Girl"** had arrived from Michigan after boat service to the Island had ended for the winter, so she spent her first winter in a pot on the sunny and windy terrace in Manhattan, mulched with leftover Christmas tree branches. In early spring, she traveled by car, island ferry, then by shopping cart over bumpy boardwalks, coming to rest in the center of the garden. Taller growing varieties surrounded the "sunny" beauty, which bloomed after all that travel, just after the tree peonies. I vowed some day to move her to the front, now three will glow front and center.

This growing season was the strangest in memory at the island, in that the winter was mild, with little snow and low rainfall. Just as the peonies were showing growth, damp fog and raw rains resulted in leaves blackened on many plants—some more than others—but the bloom was again spectacular. Everything was affected, and one apparently healthy peach tree bloomed abundantly, then proceeded to die, but continued upgrading of the soil has resulted in many welcome surprises. **"Mr. Ed,"** for instance, gave lovely blooms of different colors on the same plant—they make wonderful cut flowers. **"Pillow Talk"** and **"Mrs. FDR"** both lived up to their reputation for outstanding form, fragrance and color, and **"Hermoine"** bloomed well for the first time—seems to like her location with afternoon shade.

A **"Red Grace"** division, newly transferred to a choice spot bloomed but without expected vigor. I lifted it to check the root, and discovered a Mutsu apple tree had sneaked an exuberant root directly under the peony, literally soaking up all water and nutrients. The root was removed, the peony divided and given all new topsoil finished off with potting soil over the crown, and hopefully robust and fragrant blossoms will be among the first to greet next spring. **"Pink Derby"** was another disappointment—its leaves blackened early on, and the bloom was limited to two rather small flowers of unexceptional color. It was replenished early to allow more growing time in new soil, and perhaps it will respond better in the spring.

"Topeka Garnet," my first Japanese type of bloom, was an eye-catcher in its new location after several seasons of indifference, and healthy eyes indicate more of the same in the coming spring. Finally, another yellow tree peony, **"Age of Gold,"** acquired at the auction following the banquet in 1999, gave four golden doubles that lasted a week after the European tree peony, **"Mm. Andre'de Villiers"** (one of the first to bloom) had covered herself with enormous watermelon-red double blooms, both from Klehm's Nursery, the latter being hard to find but well worth the effort.

Some of the peonies, sporting robust foliage, turning red in the cool weather, were left to be cut back the first week in November, following a two-week driving vacation, when we close the cottage for the winter. Predictions are for more snow this year, which would be ideal for the 'sandy' barrier beach facing cold Atlantic Gales. A snug blanket of insulation for the garden, while I dream of spring's surprises.



THE GOLD MEDAL PEONIES

by W. A. Alexander

For almost 50 years (since 1923) the American Peony Society has, from time to time, chosen certain varieties of peonies to receive the Society's Gold Medal for outstanding excellence and performance. During the first 20 years or so, the award was made by the Society's Seedling Committee, but since then by the Board of Directors. In Bulletin #123, December 1951, the then editor, the late George W. Peyton, published the list of winners.

The following is the list resulting from his search of records. Name of originator, year of introduction, and year of award are included.

MRS. A. M. BRAND (Brand, 1925), St. Paul, 1923
A. B. FRANKLIN (Franklin, 1928), Chicago, 1933
MRS. J. V. EDLUND (Edlund, 1929), Chicago, 1933
HARRY F. LITTLE (Nichols, 1933), St. Paul, 1934
NICK SHAYLOR (Allison, 1931), Syracuse, 1941
ELSA SASS (Sass, H. P., 1930), Minneapolis, 1943
HANSINA BRAND (Brand, 1925), Rockford, 1946
GOLDEN GLOW (Glasscock, 1935), Rockford, 1946
MRS. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (Franklin, 1933), Guelph, 1948
DORIS COOPER (Cooper, 1946), Milwaukee, 1949

These ten varieties were the ones listed by Mr. Peyton up to the time of his search of records. Since then the following have been added to the list:

RED CHARM (Glasscock, 1944), Dixon, Illinois, 1956
MISS AMERICA (J. R. Mann-Van Steen, 1936), Dixon, Illinois, 1956
KANSAS (Bigger, 1940), Grand Forks, North Dakota, 1957
MOONSTONE (Murawska, 1943), Minneapolis, 1959
MISS AMERICA (J. R. Mann-Van Steen, 1936), Minneapolis, 1971
NICK SHAYLOR (Allison, 1931), Kingwood Center, Mansfield, OH, 1972
AGE OF GOLD T. P. (Saunders), Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1973
WALTER MAINS (Mains, 1957), Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, 1974
BU-TE (Wassenberg, 1954), Kingwood Center, Mansfield Ohio, 1975

Both **MISS AMERICA** and **NICK SHAYLOR** were awarded a second time because no one remembered they were already among the elite, which emphasizes their excellence.

—No Gold Medal awarded from 1975 until 1980.—

CYTHEREA (Saunders, 1953), Ithaca, New York, 1980
BOWL OF CREAM (Klehms, 1963), Kingwood Center, 1981
WESTERNER (Bigger, 1942), Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, 1982
CHINESE DRAGON (Saunders), Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1983
DOLORODELL (Lins, 1942), Kingwood Center, 1984
BURMA RUBY (GLasscock, 1951), Mahomet, Illinois, 1985
CORAL CHARM (Wissing, 1964), Minneapolis, 1986
NORMA VOLZ (A. L. Volz, 1968), Kingwood Center, 1987
PAULA FAY (Fay, 1962), Chicago Botanical Gardens, 1988

HIGH NOON (Saunders, 1952), Janesville, Wisconsin, 1989
SEA SHELL (Sass, 1937), Kingwood Center, 1990
WHITE CAP (Winchell 1966), Royal Botanical Gardens, 1991
AMERICA (Rudolph, 1956), Des Plains, Illinois, 1992
MOTHER'S CHOICE (Glasscock, 1950), Chicago, 1993
PILLOW TALK (Carl Klehm, 1968), Chicago, 1994
SHINTENCHI (Japan—Honorary), Chicago, 1994
SPARKLING STAR (Bigger, 1953), Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1995
GARDEN TREASURE (Hollingsworth, 1984), Kingwood Center, 1996
OLD FAITHFUL (Glasscock/Falk, 1964), Royal Botanical Gardens,
 Canada, 1997
MYRA MACRAE (R. W. Tischler, 1967), Blaine, Minnesota, 1998
LUDOVICA (Saunders 1941) Kingwood Center, Mansfield, Ohio, 1999
PINK HAWAIIAN CORAL (Roy G. Klehm, 1972) Milwaukee,
 Wisconsin, 2000.

GRAND CHAMPION PEONIES—NATIONAL EXHIBITIONS

1947	BLANCHE KING	1977	JAMES PILLOW
1948	YUKON	1978	PRINCESS MARGARET
1949	A. B. FRANKLIN	1979	Tree Peony Yachiyo Tsubaki (Eternal Camillia)
1950	KANSAS	1980	MISS AMERICA
1951	RED CHARM	1981	DOUGLAS BRAND
1952	NANCY COUSINS	1982	Tree Peony, Haku Raku Ten
1953	LE CYGNE	1983	CYTHEREA
1954	ANN COUSINS	1984	MRS. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
1955	JAMES PILLOW	1985	HANSINA BRAND
1956	LE CYGNE	1986	MINNIE SHAYLOR
1957	NO SHOW	1987	HIGH NOON—Tree Peony
1958	DORIS COOPER	1988	PINK DERBY
1960	LE CYGNE	1989	ROBERT AUTEN
1961	FRANCES MAINS	1990	ETCHED SALMON
1962	LOVELY ROSE	1991	RUFFLED SUNSET —Tree Peony
1963	MRS. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT	1992	KAMADA NISHIKI —Tree Peony
1964	HANSINA BRAND	1993	YELLOW EMPEROR
1965	RED CHARM	1994	BOWL OF CREAM
1966	ANNISQUAM	1995	KAMADA NISHIKI
1967	DORIS COOPER	1996	NANCY NICHOLAS
1968	CAROL	1997	LOIS ELAINE LANING T.P.
1969	NICK SHAYLOR	1998	COMMAND PERFORMANCE
1970	PRINCESS MARGARET	1999	MOONSTONE
1971	DOUGLAS BRAND	2000	LEMON CHIFFON
1972	SPELLBINDER		
1973	DINNER PLATE		
1974	PRINCESS MARGARET		
1975	ROBERT W. AUTEN		
1976	CAROL		

Planting Perfect Peonies in the Ozarks

from the Joplin Globe, Missouri

written by Beulah Courter, Master Gardener August 23, 2000

submitted by Gene Wild

It's peony-planting time in the Ozarks!

Well, not quite yet, but it's surely time to choose your site, prepare your soil, and pick out a new variety or two. If ordering from a catalog, do not delay, as most nurseries begin shipping in September and continue through November, weather permitting.

Fall planting is almost an imperative for peonies as these plants must have a period of winter dormancy if they are to bloom well the following spring.

Peonies bloom best in full sun. That means six hours or so of uninterrupted sunlight each day. Most varieties will bloom in partial shade, but bloom will likely be more scanty.

Avoid a site with large shrubs or trees whose roots may interfere with the nutrients and moisture needed by your plants.

Peonies have been known to live a hundred years in the same spot, so start them out in good, loamy soil. Dig a hole about a foot and a half wide and as deep. Work in plenty of humus. Manure can be used, but it must be well-rotted, placed in the bottom of the hold, and covered with a shallow layer of soil. This will keep the peony roots from coming in contact with the manure too soon and being burned. Peonies do well at a close to neutral pH level.

While peonies are quite easy to please in most respects, proper planting depth is crucial. The eyes on the peony root—the little buds protruding above the main root—must be no more than two inches below the soil surface. An inch and a half might be better, as some settling is inevitable with time and watering, which allows a bit of extra soil to wash in over the root.

A three-to four-foot spacing between the plants is good, depending, of course, on the mature size of your particular variety. A three-foot spacing is fine if your wish is for a low hedge of peonies. The four-foot spacing makes a better specimen plant. Mulch lightly the first year after planting. Straw makes a better mulch than leaves as it tends to pack down less. Be sure to remove the mulch very early in the spring.

It will probably take a year or two for your newly-planted peony to look respectful, so be patient. You may not get a typical flower for your variety the first year or so, but unless the peony is improperly planted or the site is poor the problem will resolve itself without action on your part, and you will soon have a plant that will bring you pleasure for years to come.

Peonies need little care. Too much fertilizer is harmful, although you may use a low-nitrogen all-purpose fertilizer every few years.

If you do fertilize, do so right after the plant finishes blooming. This is when energy is being stored up for the next spring's bloom. Rake up and dispose of the dead leaves and stems each fall to help prevent disease.

Botrytis blight is the most common disease to attack peonies. The spores of the fungus can over-winter in the litter on top of the ground as well as in the soil, so good sanitation is a must. Adequate air circulation is also helpful.

If in the spring your peony should suddenly wilt, turn black, and begin to die, suspect this blight. Get rid of the infected parts at once, and spray with a Bordeaux mixture. Few insects bother peonies, and the ants that are frequently seen on the blossoms are not harmful. They are simply having a good meal on the nectar secreted by the buds.

Peonies come in several forms. They can be single, double, or semi-double, plus a Japanese or anemone-flowered form in which the stamens are replaced with what appear to be extra petals. They are available in many shades of pink and red, in white and ivory, in coral, and in a very few creamy yellows. Their fragrance is memorable, and as cut flowers, they can't be beat. So, let's get planting!



A Special Thank You

Eloise and President Floyd Kimball, and Vice President Steve Johnson had a very nice lunch with Bob and Addie Tischler on Wednesday, July 19th. The purpose of the meeting was to present him with an award for his achievement in working with peonies and to present the Gold Medal for the outstanding peony for 1998—**Myra MacRae**. Following is a copy of the thank you note we received from Bob last week addressed to The American Peony Society:

8-1-00

The American Peony Society—

Recently, Eloise, Floyd and Steve treated Addie and I to an excellent lunch at the Lavender Inn in Faribault.

They then presented me with a perfectly beautiful silver-plated vase with a complimentary inscription. They also give me a special medal honoring **Myra MacRae** as the most outstanding peony in 1998. I'm so proud of **Myra MacRae**. This peony was named after my sister who lived to be 99+ years.

The National Peony Society couldn't have done anything nicer to honor me and **Myra**—what a surprise!

Thanks again for making this award so special. This Society is especially important to me.

Gratefully,

Bob

(*R.W. Tischler, 1021 E. Division St., Faribault, MN 55021*)



REGISTRATIONS

JASMIN'S SONG (Liselotte Hirsbrunner, Chesleres, Switzerland 2000) Seedling number CH 93-76. Single lactiflora. Parentage **Miss America X Pink Princess**. First bloomed 1997. This blush pink single has a flat for good substance with excellent amount of bloom, one to four buds per stem. It is reliable, has seeds, pollen with a faint fragrance. Strong stems 92 cm, blooms early to midseason, rich green foliage. It has five guard petals and five inner petals, long blooming, grown at high altitude—4000 ft. and cool climate. Diameter of flower 19 cm.

JASMIN'S DREAM (Liselotte Hirsbrunner, Chesleres, Switzerland Aug. 2000) Seedling number CH 93 19. Parentage **Miss America X Pink Princess**. First bloomed 1977. Flat pink flower, good substance, stamens, seeds, pollen, slight fragrance. Excellent amount of bloom. One to four buds per stem, reliable. Long lasting flower, grown at altitude 4000 ft. Strong, sturdy stems, height 82 cm mid-season to late bloom, good vigor, dark green foliage. Flower opens dark pink, turning to a lighter pink in a few days. Flower 18 cm.

MILLIE STOVER (R. W. Tischler, Faribault, Minnesota, 2000) Parentage unknown, early to midseason, lt. pink bomb type. Cupped blooms open well, very strong stems holding 5-6 inch blooms. 30 inches tall, dark green foliage. Sometimes a yellow ring appears about the base of the bloom but as it gets older, it fades to white. This plant stands up very well under all conditions.

REGISTRATION NAME CORRECTION

Bulletin #315 Peony number K 47-12 **Tango** (Roy G. Klehm) has been changed to **FOXTROT**.



TRANSPLANTING TREE PEONIES

Toichi Domoto, Hayward, California

TRANSPLANTING SEASON TREE PEONIES

Early to mid-September. For us in the Bay area of California, determine by digging near the outer perimeter of the plant and checking for root dormancy. No new white root hairs will be evident. The plant will still be in full foliage; it won't even be starting to change color.

METHOD

Remove all leaves. Dig plant bare root rather than with a soil ball (B&B). To be of benefit, the soil ball would be too large and too heavy to handle without special equipment. Start digging and removing soil at least one foot beyond branches and work toward center. If soil is hard, try hydraulic digging (a high pressure of water with a coarse nozzle at the end of the hose).

We have found that leaving the soil around the ball and cutting the roots back (severely) is of little or no benefit, especially if being transplanted into soil of different texture; for example, dobe to sand or vise versa.

When removing or moving roots prior to taking out of the hole, avoid extreme bending. Tree peony roots have a hard,

woody inner section surrounded by a starchy, fleshy section. Any cracks in this outer root layer may be a source for root rot.

Plants in sandy soil usually have thinner roots with more forks to them. Those in heavier (good rose soil) have fewer, thicker, and less branched roots. They may extend farther out.

AFTER TAKING PLANT OUT OF HOLE...

This step will take nerve. Close your eyes and cut back all top growth to six or eight inches of the base. Should the plant show natural divisibility, it is best to divide.

You have sacrificed flowers for one season and also top growth, but the dormant buds will be forced into growth in the spring. This shoot or shoots will develop from the base enough to produce flower the second season. (In our area the old stems can be removed after the plant is established.)

PLANTING

Planting is the same as for any bare root shrub. Spread root carefully, cover and water in.

SHIPPING, PACKING

Allow the plant to dry in the shade for several days. This will cause the roots to become limber and thus be handled without cracking the outer root layer. Tie the roots together carefully; wrap damp sphagnum moss around the roots. (If sphagnum is not available place root into plastic bag and add damp peat moss for filler. Tie the package securely to keep the moss from shifting away from the roots.)

NOTE: MARKETING

In our early years, we sold plants from seedling field. We allowed the customers to mark the plant in bloom and we delivered the bare rooted plant in September (not pruned back). These usually flowered in our customer's garden the first season, but they would take at least two to three years to flower again. We had complaints. Many of the semi and double forms would not develop the petalage after transplanting. We were accused of switching labels or sending inferior plants. We are happy to say that a number of the customers came back later and paid us for the replaced plant. I like to think that the others did not have the patience that a true peony lover possesses.



The following informative article, by request.

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

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

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

—Myron D. Bigger

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

Submitted by R.W. Tischler

The "Burbank" of the Peony World

by Ben Kerns—no date on old manuscript

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

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

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

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

On the other hand, the peony once planted, will defy all that the elements have to offer (save a killing frost) and emerge victoriously each spring with gigantic flowers of beauty in color, fragrance, and form that seldom fails to captivate the heart and mind in its quest of real soul-satisfying beauty.

Just as Kansas boasts of its wheat and white-faced cattle, those who reside in Wisconsin point with pride to their production of superlatively fine cheeses, but Minnesotans, with justification, may lay claim to the world's two foremost originator's of fine peonies, namely: A. M. Brand and A. B. Franklin, who in my opinion, have contributed more to the introduction of new peonies of the highest degree of merit than any other two contemporary originators in the peony world.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

joy and ecstasy, the delight, and beauty, which Brand peonies bring to the mind, heart and soul of man.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At the time of introduction, these 13 varieties were offered to professional growers at \$50.00 per root with no discount. That meant

that one each of the 14 cost \$650.00, and, at the time I purchased all 13, I remember that, for a few dollars more than I paid for the 13, I could have purchased a then new Ford car.

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

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

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

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

**Myrtle Gentry
Hansina Brand
Ella Christensen**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At the proper stage of ripening then the seed may be planted in rows two inches apart in the row and with rows farther apart, which may be varied according to extent of space available and amount of seed to be planted. They should be planted in small seed beds over which are stretched screen wire, properly fastened to the seed bed frame. This for the reason that, without such screen, heavy rains would tend to often wash out some of the soil, expose the seed, and thus make the seeds in general of irregular depth.

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

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

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

Taking into consideration the tedious and meticulous care that must be exercised in handling and maintaining seedling beds and seedlings until they have served their purpose, the labors performed in connection therewith, the years of patient waiting and detailed

note taking, it should be readily understood that the originator of a fine peony must protect himself by asking a very good price on each newly introduced peony of great merit.

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

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

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

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

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

Those desirous of knowing what varieties to plant in a cemetery, therefore, should ask the reliable grower for recommendations because of the truths indicated above. This is so because the reliable

grower who grows peonies extensively and knows them well, shall base his recommendations on when a normal season at blooming time brings each respective variety to its fullest and best in typical bloom.

In accepting such recommendations and acting upon them the purchaser should ever bear in mind that such recommendations were based upon a normal, typical season for that particular locality. Yet the fact remains, if a blooming season be preceded by a protracted period of abnormally low precipitation, combined with much cool and cloudy weather, the blooming time of any peony field may be delayed a week or ten days, or even more. Because of such truth even the reliable grower well-schooled in the habits of each respective variety, could not be expected to guarantee that a recommended variety for cemetery planting shall be at "its loveliest and best period of bloom" on Memorial Day. The best he can do is to weigh all relevant facts, and make such recommendation as, in his opinion, will make most propitious the chances of such planted variety blooming on Memorial Day.

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

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

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

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

stakes exhibit of one hundred varieties of the National Show, do grow a great many more varieties than that, and, should they experience a much belated season, or one in which certain rare varieties do not turn out well, they usually can lean to other varieties in proper stage for cutting, which can give them a sufficient number above the 100 varieties so that, in setting up their exhibit, they may cull out a few of their poorest and still have remaining 100 varieties of lovely typical bloom for their sweepstakes exhibit.

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

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

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

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

Of two I have most conspicuously in mind, **Festiva Maxima**, is white with conspicuous carmine blotches was introduced in 1851, so

it has been good for 99 years and is still going strong, having a place in nearly every peony show whether local or national in scope.

Again, there is another lovely pink, bomb type, **Monsieur Jules Elie** by name, introduced in 1888, and that variety has been given its share of beauty to peony fanciers for sixty-two years. As a cut flower it is grown extensively by most reliable cut flower growers who wish to give their customers the best in what is lovely. Its deep pink color and gigantic size, makes a typical bloom of this variety no less a joy to be peony fans than do many of the loveliest of the outstanding new varieties. Reference to this variety which peony enthusiasts have been enjoying for 62 years, reminds me that I spent my 1949 vacation in Chicago. I chanced to stay at the Palmer House while there. the hotel's floral sales room proved so lovely, I strolled in there on a few occasions. It was May time. Magnificent blooms of this variety were on sale. I casually asked the price. That price was \$7.50 a dozen, while I have seen this variety sold for Memorial Day in the old price-cutting days for 35¢ a dozen.

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

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

(My 25 Favorites, with name of originator)

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

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



Peony Breeding

by Sam Wissing

"SELFING"

If you will just forget about fear, and if you will do the things I am going to suggest, you might just create some worthwhile additions to the Peony Garden. The Peony has a simple Botany, and will cooperate if you will just be willing to do a few simple things. They can bring great rewards to you every year, if you will just get up the courage to start. Some of my best work has been accomplished through the simple process of "inbreeding," or "selfing" which means crossing a plant with itself.

The possibilities awaiting anyone who "inbreeds" seem endless. You might inbreed any lactiflora peony, such as "**Minnie Shaylor**" a thousand times and still not encompass all the possibilities of this formula.

So, this June, I suggest you start on any lactiflora peony that is single or semi double, for those have all the necessary reproductive organisms.

Miss America, Reine Hortense, Sea Shell, Krinkled White, and many others will set seed if inbred. be meticulous. this is important work, so why not do it the accepted, correct way. Bay all those buds selected as parents, with a one-pound or a half-pound paper bag, just as the buds begin to show color. This will protect them against rains, or against unwanted pollens borner by winds or by bees, any of which can spoil your plans. Secure the bag with a twist 'em so that the wind cannot blow it off. then if you will feel the bag each day, they will soon feel ike a marshmallow, which indicates that the bloom has begun to open. Now you may remove the bag and prepare the bloom.

First, using your fingers, scissors or tweezers, remove and throw away all the petals. The anthers on their little thread-like stems are

also to be removed but keep these in a little box or container, for they contain the pollen which you are about to use. The anthers are probably now "in dehiscence," that is, they have split open and are now covered with their own golden-yellow pollen dust. The stigma tips probably now have a sticky substance on them which will "hold" the pollen. The process of pollination is to transfer some of the pollen onto the tips of the stigmas.

Whether you place pollen from one bloom onto the stigmas of the same bloom, will not matter. So long as both are on the **same plant**, you are "selfing."

Selfing is the easiest and simplest way to begin to pollinate flowers. If you have only one lactiflora peony plant in your garden, and provided it is not one of the heaviest "bomb" doubles (in which case all the reproductive organisms have been transformed into petals) you can start on your career of pollinating. Do not imagine that because it is easy to do, its results are negligible. Far from it. The ancestry of the lactiflora peony is so immensely old and so immensely complicated, even if no other species are involved in it, that there are literally thousands of possible variations in its progeny.

Back to your work: you have now made the cross, which is half your labor. The other half is keeping your record. Replace your bag, secure it, and be sure to identify it with a label attached, on which the number of this cross is marked. Then in your notebook, under the same cross-number, write the name of the plant, date, temperature and anything else notable: time of day, etc. Incidentally the temperature should not be above 90 degrees F. It has been thought that very humid weather is not good for crossing, so notes the humidity might prove very revealing in the course of several seasons' crossing.

Another remark on records: you will be glad on that all the essential facts are there. Others may ask you about your crosses and you will be proud to be able to refer back and say, "I did so and so," or on such and such a date, or using such and such a method. The time spent in keeping the records bears as great fruit as the cross itself.

Now all you need do is await the moment when the seed will be released. I believe seed will be planted if it has attained a light brownish color but before it has been shed from the pod. The longer warmth it can have during this first Autumn, the likelier it is to germinate the next Spring.



ORIGINATORS OF THE PEONY IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE SOCIETY

Along this line the French have done more than any others. **Jaues, Calot, Crousse, Lemon, Guerin, Dessert, Lemoine, and Mechin** are familiar names. The English have added to the family while Holland and Germany have contributed also.

In America, John Richardson of Dorchester produced some of the finest. **Milton Hill, Perfection, Grandiflora, and Henry Woodward** are well at the front.

Father Terry of Crescent, Iowa, gave us one hundred named sorts. The dear, old man gave the West 50 varieties of native plums, many of

them of superior merit. When I first visited with him I was reminded of Mr. Bull who originated the Concord grape and others of great merit. Others got hold of them, made fortunes out of them but he died in the old man's home—the poor house. I stood by his grave in Concord. On the granite monument there was something like the following: "He did great things for the public but received little in return."

Mr. Terry's home was a poor, small, dilapidated affair. His barn had been burned. His noble wife was out plowing her sweet corn with the family horse. Everything had a woe begone look except that great field of peonies of which he had the finest collection in the West. I asked him, "How many do you sell a year?" "Only about \$100 worth." It was pitiful, that noble man receiving such a meager pittance. I knew he needed some printers ink so I gave him a cordial endorsement in the first edition of the Peony Manual and wrote him up for the papers. The next time I visited him happened to be his 80th birthday. He seemed hopeful and happy. "How many did you sell last year?" "Thanks to you" was his reply, "I sold \$1,000 worth." Soon after, he sold his whole collection for \$2,500. Giving the worn-out old man a helping hand is one of my pleasant memories. He was bothered to find names for his numerous family of peonies. He had been using the names of all the school teachers he could hear of but there were not enough. Then he took up the Generals. We were examining one of rare beauty when he asked, "What is your wife's name?" "Carrie." "Then this is Carrie," and he staked it accordingly. I think he died at the age of 84 and he left this a more a beautiful world than he found it.

The name of J. F. Rosenfield will always stand prominent among those who love the peony. He has been a careful, accurate and tireless propagator. We are indebted to him for **Golden Harvest**, **Floral Treasure**, **Karl Rosenfield** and others.

The late Mr. Hollis has given us some fine ones of superior merit. I met him at the great peony show at Boston and saw some of his new creations and bought several. I remember I paid him \$10 for his **Loveliness**.

Others have furnished a few. For instance, W. H. Bruning of Nebraska raised a charming white one from seed of **La Tulipe** and I bought half of it. Many others have been produced by private parties.

One of the foremost to introduce the Peony was T. C. Thurlow of West Newbury, Mass. He seemed to absorb in his gentle soul all the sweetness of his flowers and the harmonies of nature. He was the dearest friend I ever knew. He had a strong influence on my own life and awakened a passion for the beautiful which has grown with the passing years. What visits we had. We were soul brothers and of the same age. He wrote the first article on the Peony. He had a large collection. The gardener of a rich man in Illinois called on him, looked over his grounds, examined the stakes, took note of the varieties and asked what he would take for the lot. "\$7,000.00." "I will take them." They filled two cars. Mr. Thurlow then proceeded to get up a new collection, better than the first. The business is now carried on by the sons who have inherited the spirit of the father. They are originating new sorts, some of superior merit.

(From "A Manual" by C. S. Harrison. Rev. Harrison was a charter member of the Society 1904. No date on this writing.)

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Why Should We be Interested in Peonies?

W. F. Christman

In planning our gardens, we usually have a few outstanding features that we wish to follow out. One is that we desire our garden at all times to have an attractive appearance. There are a few perennials that can compare with the peony in this respect. It forms a very beautiful green background as soon as the leaves appear; in June, we are presented with a beautiful display of gorgeous bloom, but this is not all. After the blooming, the plants can be trimmed up in various shapes to conform with the rest of the landscape and present a fine background the entire season until heavy frosts cut them down.

Another desire of most gardeners is to have plants that are hardy and require minimum attention. In this respect, the peony is unrivaled by any other flower. Reports come to me from far north in the Canadian country where temperatures often drop to 65 below zero and in these very sections we have members who report their peonies never fail them. What more can we say for hardiness? They will survive drought and even exist without civilization. We know no true gardener will permit them to without cultivation, for in this way they are better able to withstand lack of moisture for extended periods of time. The general thought that peonies will not do well in the south is being disproved by a number of peony enthusiasts who have planted them as far south as Mississippi and they report splendid results. The northern section of the country is ideally suited for their culture as they need rest that winter months afford.

I grant you that peonies do not establish themselves as rapidly as many other perennials, but after the second year, they give a splendid account of themselves; even the first year after planting, some results may be expected. Year after year they increase in beauty and vigor if they are properly cared for. The refinement of the flower and the wide range of color combinations is most pleasing; the long period of bloom, with proper selection, the diversity of foliage formation; the splendid landscape possibilities; and the remunerative prospects are only a few of the scores of reasons why we should be interested in peonies.

The peonies of grandmother's day, while of great beauty, have been relegated to the background in many cases due to the gorgeous new forms and colors produced by hybridization during which it is troubled.

The peony has been traced back to a report in Pliny's History A.D. 77. The possibility of its existence long before that time is doubtless true. As early as 1879, Mr. H. Huftelen in Vick's Magazine paid the peony this splendid tribute: "No flowering plants capable of enduring our northern winters are more satisfactory than the peonies. Massive without being coarse, fragrant without being pungent, grand without being gaudy, various in form and color, beyond the possibility of being successfully superseded, they stand in the first rank of hardy flowers."

A FEW DON'TS

If there is one word in the English language that stands out distinctively in our recollection it is the word *don't*. We have heard it from early childhood, and one of our first admonitions was summed up in this one word. It is a word that seems to stay with us through life as we are continually reminded don't forget, don't neglect, don't do this and don't do that. We are sometimes fed up on the word, but

it still persists to haunt us and often if it is not heeded, it causes us no end of trouble and suffering.

Some years ago, I received the following list of *Don'ts* with a shipment of peonies I had ordered. I have always considered them worth saving, and in case some of my readers have not seen them, I am having them presented with the hope that some good may come of them as the advice given is sound and well worthwhile remembering.

A few simple word—mostly, “THOU SHALT NOT'S,” concerning the planting and care of peonies, although intended primarily for the utter novice, the perusal will not seriously injure those who know all about peony “culture.”

DON'T, FIRST OF ALL, BE ALARMED AT THESE “DON'TS” and assume that peony culture must be formidable and difficult—not to say dangerous. It isn't. Peonies are neither orchids nor roses, and are literally easier to grow than a geranium. As a matter of fact, you may stick your peonies in the ground, never give them another thought, and the probabilities are that year after year they will struggle through the weeds and grass and produce a very fair display of flowers. But every growing thing responds to extra care and attention, and these instructions are for those who want extra fine results.

BUT DON'T BE TOO SOLICITOUS ABOUT YOUR PEONIES nor overdo the nursing and coddling business. They'll resent it. They don't like much stirring of the ground about their stems. Briefly, about the principal “culture” consists in letting them alone, except to keep them clear of grass and weeds. But of all things, along about the time the first robin becomes insistent in the spring.

DON'T GO AFTER YOUR PEONIES WITH A RAKE to remove the light mulch of litter you may have scattered over them the preceding fall. This may be left on to rot; it will serve as a manure. We are quite sure that many disappointments—the appearance of only one or two shoots—are due to some of the eyes having been destroyed, either hasty or rough planting or a stirring of the ground directly over the plants in early spring. No weeding or raking should be done near the plants until the shoots are well up out of the ground.

DON'T “EXCAVATE TO THE DEPTH OF 2½ TO 3 FEET” for the planting of your peonies, unless you want to do it just for your health. It isn't necessary. Some hysterical horticulturist wrote this a hundred years or so ago, and every peony man since has seemed to think it necessary to copy it in his catalog. It has always made us grin. Imagine, excavating to the depth of 1½ to 3 feet for a bed of 100 peonies or even 50. It brings visions of steam-shovels—straining horses—shouting men. The duffer who first wrote that ought to have added, “and if you change your mind about peonies, and decide to have a house instead, you will have an excavation ready for the foundations.” Simply dig a hole, for each individual root. the hole need not be “as deep as a well, nor as wide as a church door,” as Mr. Shakespeare somewhere remarks, but just large enough for the root to go in, with some little space to spare all around it.

DON'T USE MANURE at least, don't use fresh manure in any way, shape, or form, unless as a mulch after planting, and even in this case, it must be kept away from directly over the crown of the plant. Even so-called “well-rotted” manure is, alas, too frequently not *sufficiently* well-rotted to be used in planting. It very frequently—if not always—

causes decay in the root when coming in direct contact with it. If your ground has been prepared with manure a year in advance of planting, it will be an excellent thing; otherwise, when you come to set your roots.

DON'T USE MANURE AT ALL—it's not necessary! Our good afore-said horticultural friend of 1816 wrote that peonies were "gross feed-ers." This is not only unpoetic and inelegant, but also, strictly speak-ing, not true. Peonies can be, and frequently are over-fed. So assum-ing that you have just ordinarily good garden soil, we would advise against enriching it in any way, except by the addition of pure raw bonemeal, obtainable at most any seed store or even hardware stores. Mix thoroughly about one pound of this with the ground that is to go with each and every peony you plant; that is, into each hole dug. This fertilizer is perfectly safe, will not burn, and is likely to produce remarkable results in the quality of blooms the very first season. But

DON'T DOSE THE SOIL with a variety of commercial fertilizers other than the one we have named. We know of a man who, in preparing for his peonies, used four different combinations of com-mercial fertilizer, and some wood ashes and lime. Just what hap-pened subsequently to those amazed roots, we haven't heard.

DON'T PLANT TOO DEEP Too deep planting is responsible for many partial to complete failures. If roots are set with eyes much more than three inches below the level of the soil when planting is completed, the plants may fail to bloom for several years, or, the blooms may be of indifferent quality year after year.

DON'T PLANT TOO SHALLOW Plants with the top-most eyes *less* than two inches below the level of the soil, are likely to be exposed in one way or another. From 2½ to 3 inches is about right, making due allowance for settling of ground after planting.

DON'T PLANT TOO CLOSE for permanent planting; this is, if you mean to let them remain as you plant them—and we hope you do. Peonies should not be set closer than three feet apart each way. *Four feet is far better.*

DON'T WORRY ABOUT "PROTECTION" Peonies (all varieties) are literally as "hardy as the oak"—another old expression—and need no protection whatever, even in latitudes where the temperature goes down to any quantity of degrees below zero. Our experience has been that the best blooming seasons are invariably those which follow hard, "stay-frozen" winters. We therefore advise against much protection: that is, do not smother the roots with great heaps of "mulch." The first winter after planting the roots are, of course, loose in the ground, and for this one reason, a light cover of about two inches of coarse lit-ter—grass, or fine straw—is *necessary to prevent heaving of roots.*

Patrons should remember that the larger the peony root or "clump" is the poorer it looks from mere point of beauty. The grower who sends out very young plants—from perhaps one year from division—deliv-ers the best looking plant. It is cleaner and fresher in appearance, because there is nothing to the root *but* new growth. It is the natural process in the growth of the peony, for the older portions of the root to disintegrate, and slowly disappear, as they are replaced by new growth. Judge a root—its productiveness—by the vigor of the *new* root growth, and the number and *quality* of the eyes. Never mind what the older portions of the root look like.

DON'T PLANT IN LOW WET GROUND Peonies require lots of moisture but they will not do well in low and constantly damp ground. A situation where there would be constant supply of water around the roots, they would not tolerate at all.

DON'T PLANT UNDER TREES Peonies will do admirably in partial shade—the shade cast by buildings or trees when the latter are located at a considerable distance. But in no case should the roots be set—say for example—within 30 feet of a tree a foot in diameter, and they cannot do well when planted within 12 feet of a privet hedge.

DON'T PLANT PEONIES ALONG THE FOUNDATION WALLS OF A BUILDING unless you see to it that the plants get their share of water during the growing season. Frequently, plantings about the base of a house receive no water for many weeks in succession, the rains all coming from the wrong direction—for the plants. Moreover, the soil directly around the house frequently contains too much miscellaneous refuse—often large quantities of lime—for plants to do well.

DON'T FAIL TO DISBUD To obtain the best results—enormous fancy blooms—plants should be disbudded in early April, or just as soon as the buds can be gotten hold of and pinched off. Usually three or four buds will be found on each stem. Pinch off all but the central or largest bud. Many varieties are described as “blooming in clusters,” but these “clusters” are never very satisfactory unless merely a lot of color is desired.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ANTS At a certain stage in their development, peony buds exude a sticky substance which attracts ants by the thousands and they swarm all over the buds and plants. It is scarcely worthwhile to take any trouble to get rid of them inasmuch as they *don't do the slightest injury*, and by the time the buds are ready to unfold, have entirely disappeared.

DON'T MOVE YOUR PEONIES Some growers have voiced the opinion that roots ought to be taken up and divided every four or five years. In this, we emphatically dissent. Roots should be left undisturbed indefinitely. If this is done, the plants will increase in vigor and productiveness year after year, the blooms growing larger and more fragrant and nearer and nearer to absolute perfection in form. We know of a clump of peonies that has remained undisturbed for 25 years. It measures eight feet across and produces every year from 100 to 130 magnificent blooms.

DON'T, DON'T, DON'T, DO THIS It seems incredible that it could be so, but we are nonetheless inclined to believe that a great many people thoughtlessly cut down the peony stems after blooming, often close to the ground, to make room for other flowering plants—perhaps annuals nearby. A peony root has actually more lives than the proverbial cat, but this often kills it outright, and if it does not, will at least, in every case, cripple the plant to the extent of its bearing the very poorest sort of flowers for several subsequent seasons. Foliage is necessary to the life of any plant: in other words, it breathes through, and lives by reason of, its leaves, and thus through the summer months the peony is growing below ground, storing up energy, and forming its eyes for the following season's bloom. It is plainly obvious too, that even in cutting blooms, too much stem should not be taken with the flower. *At least two sprays of leaves must be left growing on every stem from which you take a bloom.* This is almost as important as not cutting down the whole plant. By

about the first of September, the root has finished its work and has become dormant. The tops may then be cut off, but we advise cutting not right down to the ground, but allowing a few inches of the stems to show, to the end that when the annual garden clean-up comes the following spring, you will know just where the peonies are, and therefore where to *avoid raking*.

DON'T FAIL TO KEEP A SHARP EYE for Mr. Cut-Worm. This personage, not content with mowing down corn, beans and things, will sometimes take a jaunt into the flower garden, and cut off a thick peony stem or two. Or, he may eat his way just half through it, causing the stem to look sick, and you to suspect that it is the stem disease with which you have to grapple. Observe the plant close to the ground before you send for the (horticultural) physician; and if you find Mr. Cut-Worm, step on him.

DON'T BE TOO GREATLY PEEVED if your color scheme goes askew. Many people seem to plan their peony plantings with a certain color effect in mind, or else for a definite succession of bloom. This is the one direction, to our minds, in which peonies sometimes disappoint. For "early," "mid-season," and "late," attached to the description of the varieties in the catalogs, are really very uncertain. Climate, soil, and the vagaries of the season all have an enormous influence on the blooming period. For example, two certain varieties may bloom here in our soil and climate, at the same time, which out in—well, say—Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, they may bloom a week apart. Even here, in our own soil, we have had in certain season, **Couronne d'Or** open very shortly after **Festiva Maxima**, although normally they are ten days and more apart. This illustrates the effect that certain season have on some varieties, when planted side by side. This sort of thing makes it incomprehensible to us why any grower should list and offer both **Jeanne d'Arc** and **Golden Harvest** for example. they are practically identical, except that they bloom just about "twenty minutes apart."



The Lure of the Peony

by Geo. W. Veditz

Bulletin No. 23, Febr. 1925

June is becoming in many gardens more and more the month of the peony, and in more and more gardens is the peony becoming the undisputed queen of the early summer.

In thousands of gardens peonies have become established sojourners, and in hundreds more where plants were set out for the first time last fall, anxiously expected blooms are for the first time, likewise, greeting the eye of the gardener as his very own.

The vogue of the peony as the flower of late spring and just marking the entry of summer is increasing with each passing year, and the delight and pleasure that is the dividend of the space, time and care given the plants is among the most enviable and cherished of the entire garden cycle.

It is not merely the appeal to the eye of the harmony of color and beauty of form of the individual blooms, but the peony more than any other flower seems to lend itself to the play of fancy and imagination. Probably no more extravagantly fulsome word picture of any flower

was ever written than the description of **Monsieur Jules Elie** that appeared in some catalogs a few season back, and even now some peony growers attempt to paint the lily and refine pure gold in their word pictures of their favorite creations.

With most peony lovers the names of the different varieties have no special significance beyond that each calls to mind and represents a certain peony of more or less individuality and excellence. But nevertheless these names recall during eleven months of the year haunting visions of beauty, or white, pink, or red perfection, and more, perhaps, than any other names give a negative answer to the poet's query, "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"

But the great majority bear names bestowed upon them as a mark of esteem for some member of the family, or a friend, or some patron of the originator; and to this originator and his friends the name of any such variety immediately conjures before the mind's eye the sponsor in his habit, or in her beauty, as they lived, and brings a train of associations out of memory's jewel box.

But the average peony lover not having this advantage merely associates the name with the flower and seldom goes further unless some incident or association more or less personal gives the variety an individuality nor possessed by other plants in the garden.

It is this possibility of associating the fanciful and imaginative with so many of its varieties that gives the peony a distinctiveness possessed by no other of our garden flowers, whether roses, iris, gladioli, or dahlias. Many of the fine old standard varieties we have had for generations, so long, in fact, that they have become household friends. Once established, they stay with us through the heat of the summer sun and the furious winter's rages, nor do they, like the dahlia and gladiolus, ask for wages in that they should be dug up in the fall and safely bestowed during the long period of dormancy.

Even where the peony bed may contain only one plant, or two or three, this flower receives a consideration and loving attention that is bestowed on no others, and this is why our grandmothers and great-grandmothers gave their "pineys," despite their short season of bloom, first place in their affections.

Every peony lover will find the beauty of his garden enhanced manyfold if he will allow his fancy free rein and weave a nimbus of the romantic around this or the other of these flowers of his heart of hearts, connecting it with some personal experience which he alone may know.

It was the winter's good fortune to see, some dozen years back, a photoplay starring Madame Bernhardt as Queen Elizabeth. Those who have seen this picture play may recall Madame Bernhardt's rendition of this role as perhaps the most truly regal impersonation ever given of any queen either upon the screen or upon the stage, nor can the writer recall a more vivid representation of this, one of the most dramatic periods in the world's history. Unconsciously he transferred the majesty of the make-believe queen to the peony **Sarah Bernhardt** as described in the various catalogs, and ever since he acquired a plant of this Lemoine peony he has associated the royally beautiful blooms with the great tragedienne. As often as not when making his morning or evening rounds among his peonies he would stop before this plant and make mental obeisance, "**Sarah Bernhardt**, I salute you!" To him this flower had acquired a splendor extraneous of itself and beyond its mere appellation.

Another such peony is **Lady Alexandra Duff**. What owner of this Kelway peony may not have asked, "Who was this Lady Alexandra? If this flower is the most beautiful of all English peonies, was not its fair sponsor possessed of a loveliness in keeping with that of the bloom? Who was this charming and elusive personality? Was she the most glorious of all English women, the Lady Diana Manners of a score of years back?"

Most peony lovers are familiar with the tradition connected with this peony; how it was loved long since, then lost awhile to become even nameless except as the "Lost Peony;" to be searched for in unavailing quest here and there, and to be finally found again in the garden of the veteran peony lover, Walter L. Gumm, of Remington, Indiana.

It always jars the writer's sensibilities to see the names of this glorious peony hacked down to "**Lady Duff**," or to be given even a masculine form, "**Lady Alexander Duff**." He has always insisted upon giving it its full sonorous name, and has always associated the flower, entrancingly attractive in the fullness of its bloom, with some fair English beauty, that for all he knew never existed.

And reciprocally, no matter who or what the original Lady Alexandra may have been, her peony namesake invests her with a glamour and fancy for those who have never seen or heard of her, and this, after all, is the finest tribute to beauty in the abstract, as it is based entirely on the imagination. Were this lady to visit our next national peony show in persona, it is not difficult to picture the consideration and homage that would be paid her by every peony connoisseur there as godmother to one of the loveliest flowers in existence.

In this connection it is quite possible that Lemoine might have invested his greatest creation with more distinctive individual attributes—in the minds of its possessors, of course—had he named it for Madame Recamier, loveliest woman of the First Empire, and claiming a place in history for no other reason than her charm and the sweetness of her disposition. Le Cygne must inevitably, then, possess a fascination additional to and apart from its swan-like purity and grace for all those, and there must be many, familiar with the story of this lovely blind French woman of the long ago.

Who were Monsieur Martin Cahuzac, Philippe Rivoire, and Solange? Few of us know. But invest the last with a title, make him the Comte de Solange, and the imaginative peony lover immediately has a trio that may have been contemporary with d'Artagnan, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, and that with these four might give him a sweeping salute as they stepped out of the pages of some sequel to *Les Trois Mousquetaires* or *Vingt Ans Apres*. Solange and Monsieur Martin have a place in the writer's affections that measures up to the reality he has tried to give the unknown, and as for Philippe, instead of being a scion of the modern house of Riviere, he has been moved back three centuries and made into a cavalier of the d'Artagnan type. The blooms themselves have become personal friends and have been invested with an interest additional to their intrinsic beauty.

The writer's **La Fee** is not merely a beautiful peony. She is a fairy, she is a Morgain la Fee, the Fata Morgana of King Arthur's days, the fay of the mirage and of enchantment, of good fortune and great beneficence, the fay of the fairy tales of wondering childhood, and as such her blooms have become visitors from fairy land.

The loveliest of all June flowers is simply **Therese**. Therese? Who was she? Dessert's inamorata? Dessert knew, if we do not. Therese what? Affix or substitute the name of any friend that you hold dear, and your garden will have a poesy and glamour it could not have were **Therese** to continue merely a lovely peony with no attribute or association beyond its beauty and fragrance.

Our oldest peony but one, now exactly one hundred years old, * has the oddest of all peony names, but just why Lemon should have called it **Edulis Superba** must be a puzzle, unless he regarded its petals as food fit for the gods. **Edulis Superba**! How many countless gardens has it not graced with its presence during its long life of a century! What is the long, line of ancestry of your own particular plant, what ghosts of peony lovers of yesteryear may not revisit our gardens to enjoy anew the fragrant exhalations of this herald of spring glory? Through what scores of hands may it not have passed in the process of division and transplanting, making it a more frequent household guest than all others, with the possible exception of **Fragrans** and **Festiva Maxima**?

***Edulis Superba (Lemon 1824).**

The writer has a friend owning a rare collection of peonies and who, moreover, knows how to make them bud and bloom with a master-gardener's skill who dislikes to cut his flowers, but prefers to let them live, die, and wither on the stem, and who, when he does cut them for vases in the house, accords them the same homage that the priests may have done to votive offerings in some ancient temple of Flora or Ceres. To receive a long-stemmed bouquet of peonies from this gentleman is a true token of appreciation and regard. There are doubtless many others with the same reluctance to remove their flowers from the garden. This attitude is another form of sentiment that made the ancient Greeks refrain from stripping leaves or cutting twigs, or otherwise mutilating the trees and flowers of certain groves under the belief that they were dryads or wood nymphs transformed for the day, to resume their fairy form and hold their elfin revels on moonlight or starlit nights, a pretty superstition that had its counterpart in the stories of our pagan ancestors, that the circling fairy rings that clean-hearted children might see in the moonlight on the meadows, became field flowers when the gambols were over.

Where imagination and romance do not play a leading part in the annual drama of the garden, a drama with its entrances and its exits, the gardener misses a large share of the pleasure that should be the gift of every garden. The peony lover, perhaps more than any other specialist, if one may use this term, by reason of the long-established tenure of his tenants, may enshrine them in his memory and visualize their coming again, and even if he lives but for and in the present, he may quote Emerson's *Rhodora*:

"If the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew;
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same Power that brought me there brought you."



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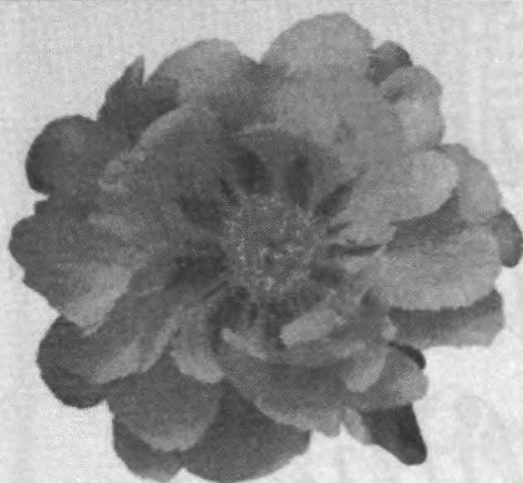
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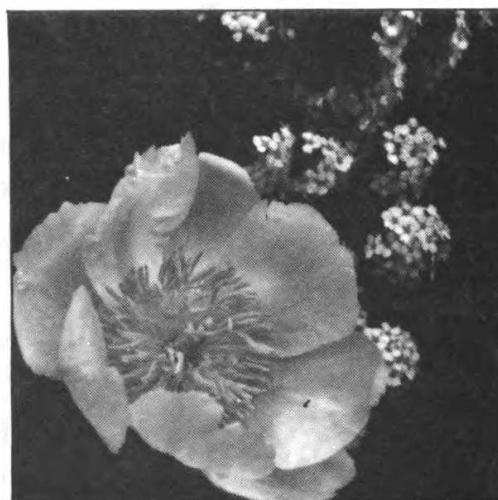
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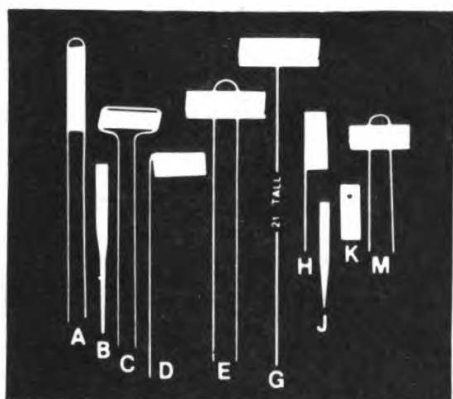
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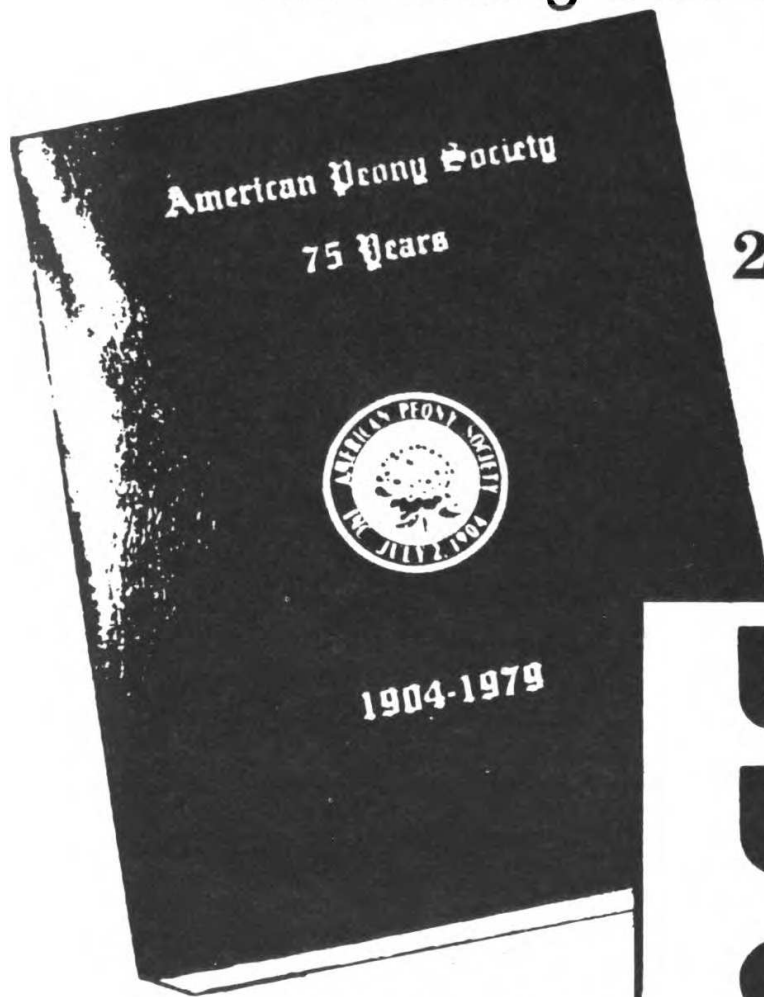
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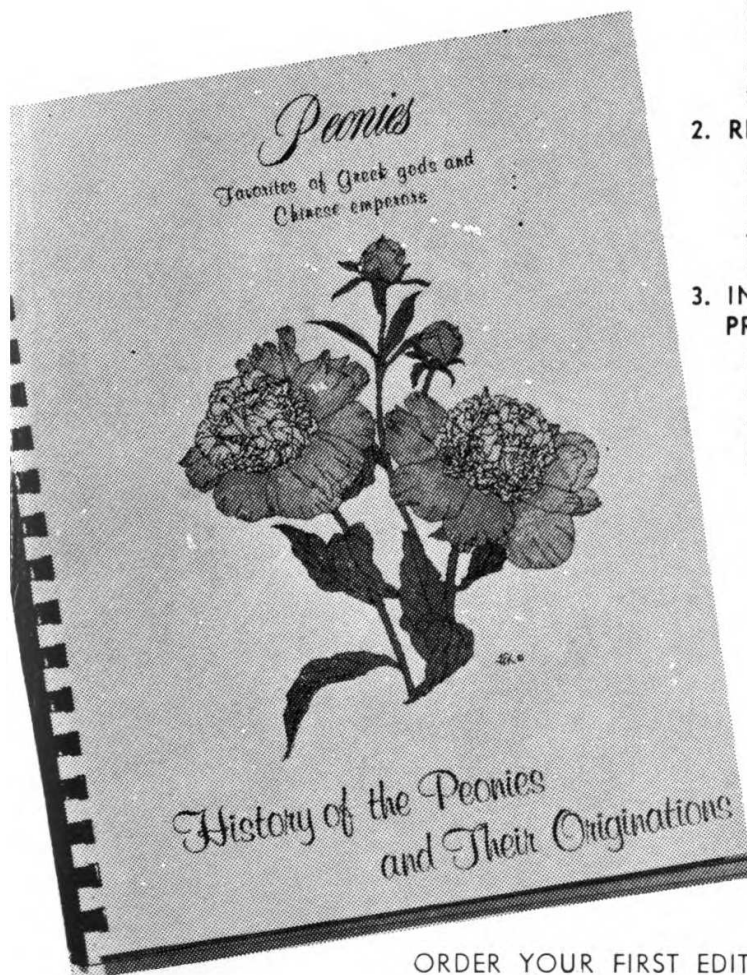
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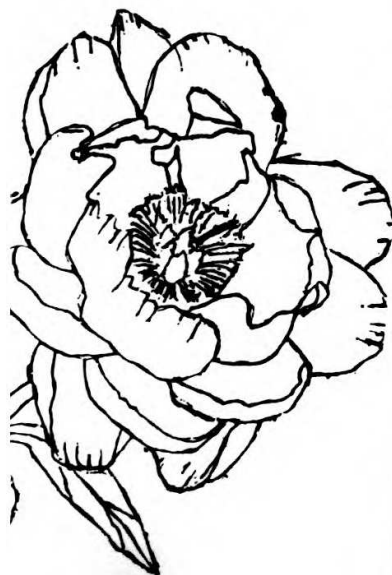
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