

Horticultural News and Research Important to American Gardeners

MAGNIFICENT ACQUISITION

The Chicago Botanic Garden's (CBG) June Price Reedy Horticultural Library has acquired a priceless collection of 18th century (and earlier) botanical, horticultural, and gardening works from the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.

The collection includes 2,000 journal titles and 2,219 rare books, including Theophrastus' *De Historia Plantarum*, the oldest book in the collection, published in 1483. Other gems in the collection are su-

An illustration of a cucumber from one of the newly acquired rare books at the CBG.



perb examples of hand-colored botanical illustration such as Basilius Besler's *Hortus Eystettensis*, first editions of Darwin's journals, and seminal works on landscape architecture and American horticulture. "It's the sort of collection you dream about having access to and being able to work with," says Edward J. Valauskus, manager of CBG's Library and Plant Information Office. The new acquisitions are sure to make the Chicago Botanic Garden's library a Mecca for garden historians.

SOYBEAN SUNSCREEN

Soybeans are best known in their culinary forms such as tofu and miso, but they are also the basis of hundreds of products from poultry feed to adhesives and concrete building materials. The soybean industry generates an estimated 800 million pounds of excess oil each year, and researchers have eagerly sought ways to utilize this surplus.

Now this oil is being turned into SoyScreen™, an additive formulated to block the sun's ultraviolet light.

Phlox Get Humidity Test

"Phlox is the backbone of the summer garden, and it should dominate the borders," wrote southern garden writer Elizabeth Lawrence. The Perennial Plant Association (PPA) and The Georgia Green Industry (GGI) agree, having bestowed, respectively, the 2002 Plant of the Year on *Phlox paniculata* 'David' and Gold Medal Winner for 2000 on *Phlox paniculata* 'Robert Poore.'

Both winners were chosen for their alleged resistance to powdery mildew, most commonly caused by the fungus *Erysiphe cichoracearum*. Trials under conditions in the North—at the University of Vermont by Leonard Perry, on Long Island by Margery Daughtrey, and at Chicago Botanic Garden by Richard Hawke have demonstrated real differences in powdery mildew resistance among garden phlox cultivars.

Recognizing that regional conditions

have enormous bearing on plant performance, researchers at North Carolina State University's Mountain Horticultural Research and Extension Center (MHREC) in Fletcher set up a trial to determine which cultivars per-

form best in the humid southeastern United States. In April 1999, 33 different cultivars of garden phlox were planted in a simulated garden situation and maintained for three years without chemical pesticides.

After the second winter, cultivars that were weakened by disease and died in significant numbers were dropped from the trials.

No plant remained mildew free through three seasons at the Fletcher test site, but some showed great resistance (see the box below for results).

—Dick Bir, Extension horticulture specialist, North Carolina State University at Fletcher



Phlox carolina exhibited good powdery mildew resistance.

MILDEW RESISTANCE OF TESTED PHLOX

Garden phlox (mostly cultivars of *P. paniculata* or *P. maculata*) showing differing degrees of powdery mildew disease resistance at MHCRC, Fletcher, North Carolina.

HIGHLY RESISTANT (11 percent or less foliage mildew)

'David', 'Delta Snow', 'Natascha', *Phlox carolina*, 'Robert Poore', 'Speed Limit 45'

MODERATELY RESISTANT (25 to 50 percent foliage mildew)

'Fairest One', 'Magnificence', 'Miss Jo-Ellen', 'Katherine', 'Nora Leigh', 'Rosalinde'

POORLY RESISTANT (over 50 percent foliage mildew)

'Franz Schubert', 'Miss Jill', 'Miss Karen', 'Miss Margie', 'Miss Mary', 'Mt. Fuji', 'Nicky', 'Russian Violet', 'Sir John Falstaff', 'Starfire', 'Tenor', 'The King', 'White Admiral'

USDA research chemist Dave Compton came up with the idea of using soybean oil as a sunscreen in the course of looking for value-added uses for commodity crops. He and colleague Joe Laszlo formulated SoyScreen by using an enzyme to combine ferulic acid—an anti-oxidant commonly found in plants—and soybean oil.

Unlike conventional petroleum-based sunblocks, SoyScreen is also gentler on the environment. “Both the product and the process we use to make it are environmentally friendly,” says Compton. “Soybean oil makes it water insoluble, and ferulic acid absorbs the light—both UVA and UVB. SoyScreen is biodegradable and won’t bioaccumulate.”

In Sun Protection Factor (SPF) tests, SoyScreen offered the best overall protection against both UVA and UVB wavelengths compared with conventional sunscreen chemicals. “Currently a company is negotiating a license for the patent,” says Compton. “They are hoping to test market early next year and the products could be out in late 2004 or early 2005.”

GOURDGEIOUS ART

Interest in gourds has been burgeoning. The American Gourd Society (AGS) is 16 chapters strong and growing. Gourd fanciers attend gourd festivals around the country and read gourd publications such as AGS’s magazine, *The Gourd*. Two other magazines, *Gourd Art Today* and *Through the Gourdvine*, and the online



Utah artist Mary Hogue’s sculpture is carved from a seven-inch cannon ball gourd.

Gourdzette publish gourd-related articles.

The growing interest in gourds is due in part to the fact that gourds provide superb raw material for crafters. Burning tools, paints, and dyes can transform gourds into *objets d’art*.

Gourd art isn’t new. In Peru, it’s been an art form for 4,000 years. In other parts of the world, gourds are routinely turned into useful and/or decorative objects.

One place where gourd artists can exhibit their work is at the 7th Annual International Gourd Art Festival, to be held June 21 and 22, 2003, at Welburn Gourd Farm in De Luz Canyon, Fallbrook, California. “There will be over 50 talented gourd artists from around the world displaying and selling their masterpieces,” says festival director Patti Diaz. “We expect over 10,000 visitors from all parts of the world.”

For information about the festival, e-mail info@welburngourdfarm.com or call (760) 728-4271. To learn more about gourds and gourd-related activities, visit the AGS Web site: www.americangourdsociety.org/join.html.

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People and Places in the News

PANAYOTI KELAIDIS WINS NATIONAL AWARD

Panayoti Kelaidis, curator of plant collections at Denver Botanic Gardens, has received the National Garden Club's 2003 Award of Excellence, granted annually to an individual whose contributions to the field of horticulture have national or worldwide significance. Creator of Denver Botanic Garden's award-winning Rock Alpine Garden, Kelaidis speaks and writes prolifically on a wide range of horticultural topics.

PEDALING FOR PLANT RESEARCH

Gordon Bailey Jr., chairman of the board of Bailey Nurseries in Newport, Minnesota, is expected to complete the third and last leg of a cross-country bike trip this summer. Bailey's odyssey began in 1999, when he biked from Fort Clatsop, Oregon, to Newport, Minnesota. The first leg of the "tour de hort" raised more than \$350,000 for The Horticultural Research Institute (HRI), the research arm of the American Nursery and Landscape Association (ANLA). In 2001, Bailey cycled from Minnesota to Cleveland. The third leg is scheduled to begin this summer in Cleveland and end in Boston for ANLA's 2003 Convention and Learning Re-

People and Places in the News

visit www.baileynursery.com/bnf/bnf-bikeride2001.asp.

LAWRENCE HALPRIN RECEIVES NATIONAL MEDAL OF ARTS

In a ceremony at the Oval Office on March 6, 2003, President George W. Bush and First Lady and Honorary Chairman of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities Laura Bush presented landscape architect Lawrence Halprin with the National Medal of Arts. Halprin's designs, known for their organic, free-flowing quality, include Seattle's Freeway Park, San Francisco's Ghirardelli Square, and the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C.

TEXAS PLANTSMAN'S LEGACY LIVES ON ONLINE

Benny J. Simpson, a pioneer in the use of Texas natives in landscaping and co-founder of the Texas Native Plant Society, died in 1996, but his work lives on in a new Web site: Benny Simpson's Texas Native Shrubs (<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/nativeshrubs>) launched this February. It is a companion to Benny Simpson's Texas Native Trees (<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/natives/tamuhort.html>), launched in 1999.

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