

# THE NATIONAL HORTICULTURAL MAGAZINE

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## UNION OF THE NATIONAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY AND THE AMERICAN HORTI- CULTURAL SOCIETY

The year 1922 is notable in the annals of American horticulture, for in that year, within a period of several months, two horticultural societies, national in scope, were organized. The National Horticultural Society was incorporated on July 1, 1922. The American Horticultural Society came into being in September of the same year. From the first, efforts were made to unite the two organizations. Committees were appointed by both societies to further this purpose. Negotiations covering several years' time have come to a happy close. During this period much constructive work was necessarily left undone. At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the National Horticultural Society on March 15, 1926, a plan of union, prepared by the committees of both organizations, was ratified to take effect March 25, 1926. Similar action was taken at a regular meeting of the American Horticultural Society on June 15, 1926. The preamble of the constitution adopted, clearly states the purpose of the union: "In order to further the best interests of American horticulture the National Horticultural Society and the American Horticultural Society have joined forces in a single organization to carry on the life and traditions of both organizations more effectively."

The new Society will be known as the American Horticultural Society. Headquarters will be maintained at Washington, D. C. The National Horticultural Magazine will be continued as the official organ of the new Society. Annual dues are \$3.00, including a subscription to all the publications of the Society. All members of both organizations in good standing at the time of union will automatically become charter members of the new American Horticultural Society.

All Fellows of the National Horticultural Society are urged to support the new Society since it continues the life and traditions of both societies. *The work which has been temporarily held up pending the negotiations can now be effectively carried out. Your support is essential to further progress.*

Send your dues directly to the Secretary of the new Society, Mr. D. Victor Lumsden, 1629 Columbia Road, Washington, D. C.

Committee on Union for the National Horticultural Society:

HAMILTON TRAUB, Chairman,  
FANNIE MAHOOD HEATH,  
A. L. TRUAX.

## THE HISTORY OF THE PLEAS PEONIES

By SARAH A. PLEAS, H. F. N. H. S.

(The following is the first of a series of articles detailing the history of the Pleas peonies. The articles to follow will be published in future issues.—Ed.)

### I.

#### AN APOLOGY

Lines written to the Fellows of the National Horticultural Society on the completion of the History of the Pleas Peonies.

Being past four score and nine years,  
Each with full meed of joy and tears;

With rapidly advancing age  
Behind the footlights on life's stage;

With faltering step and rigid hand  
That can scarce hold my fountain pen

Which often falls and rolls a bit,  
And spoils the page that I have writ;

With ears grown dull and eyes now dim,  
The world shut out, my life shut in;

My Peonies of long ago,  
I see as when they first did blow!

But memory of this writing done,  
I cannot long depend upon:

The things that I wrote yesterday  
Are repeated again today.

Since I can neither knit nor sew,  
Nor do the things that I would do;

Old Father Time came kindly round,  
Laying all life's burdens down,

And gave instead these Peonies,  
Together with songbirds in the trees,

As constant companions in my home  
To bloom and sing through years to come.

Whatever else the years may bring,—  
These flowers will bloom, the birds will sing.

Sweet memories of this happy past,  
Of joy stored up that will last and last,

That cheer me now from day to day;  
Shall happy my life away.



"Our deeds shall follow us from afar"

Although I was highly pleased to receive a request from Secretary Traub to write a brief history of the *Pleas* peonies, I was reluctant to undertake the task, for it would have been far easier to have written a book than a magazine article. The history of *Elwood Pleas* (syn. *Lost Treasure*), or *Nellie Pleas* (Syn. *Multiflora*) could easily take up the space of an entire article even if all thrills, all frills and remarks were omitted. The request is equivalent to being asked to relate, at the breakfast table, the long sweet romance of my second youth occupied in raising these Floral children. Under the limitations, I have done my best, and I herewith greet my old and new friends, the Fellows of the National Horticultural Society, without further apology. No greater honor could have come to me than a request to write this history of how my peonies were raised, their parentage, names and synonyms, my estimate as to favorites together with such other facts that will interest the Fellows of the Society.

I am often asked which of all my treasures—all so beautiful, and many nearly alike—are my favorites. It is no longer a secret that I christened my favorite *Elwood Pleas*, the name I loved best. By whatever name a child is called, that name becomes endeared to the fond mother. Likewise, a peony which has received the name of a dear one becomes doubly a subject for admiration and attachment. I strongly urge every peony enthusiast, who has the space, to plant a few seeds without expecting a prize winner. In this way you may have the pleasure of growing and naming a few floral children of your own that will not voluntarily ever leave your home, but may in time be freely given to your friends to brighten their homes also. I have named more than 100 peonies, everyone a credit to its type, but so many were so nearly alike that the largest and best only were offered to florists. Most others were given to friends, or sold to those who came to admire them.

Labels are short lived, and names not of interest to others are soon forgotten. Fortunately, my annual record of sales, including the name, number and date have been preserved. These are now my source for such names as have been long forgotten. Naturally, when these records are now gone over, I am able to recall the location of the plants in the garden, the character of bloom—double, single or Japanese. Since this history is not written primarily for the commercial grower, but is to be an intimate record for the amateur and a contribution to garden lore, I have spent many days in overhauling old records searching out data that may not have any immediate value in dollars and cents. In the long run, however, the enthusiasm of the amateur will become the basis of the demand for the products of the commercial grower.

Having recently written, by request for horticultural magazines, full details for stratifying and planting peony seed, together with cultural directions, and knowing that those interested in growing peonies may find additional information on this subject in trade catalogs, I shall not repeat such details here.

In 1855, I first saw a peony plant bearing seeds. I at once suggested to the florist, whom I considered a cyclopedia, that it might be interesting to plant these. I was at

once assured that they would "all come up single, small, of poor color and of no value." This put a damper on my enthusiasm for many years. I noticed little seedlings near the *Queen*, but these were merely tolerated much as volunteer perennials are, until they must give way to better plants. Some of these chance seedlings came up among rose bushes and other larger plants where they escaped the hoe. These slowly gained in size, but with the garden full of really beautiful things they were of no particular interest to me for the time being. While strolling leisurely adown the walk with little *Nellie*, a bloom half-concealed was seen among the bushes. My surprise and delight were so manifest that *Nellie*, with the winsome assurance of the household pet, exultantly reached out her dimpled hand, gleefully exclaiming, "*Nellie's pitty flower*," thus unconsciously christening, whilst receiving it, the *Nellie Pleas*. By whatever synonyms it may be burdened with hereafter, it will be known in my home only as *Nellie Pleas*. When removed to a bed cut in the sod on the lawn, it developed the largest blooms borne in the largest clusters I have ever known. The first division was sold to J. T. Lovett for \$25.00 with exclusive right to sell it. *Susanna*, of a more pronounced shade of pink, full double, soon made its debut. *Lurana* and *Virginia G. Cory*, which bloomed a year or two later, were good double blooms. These were sold and listed by H. A. Terry. *Ernest L. Pleas*, a full double, deep rose, unique in having many petals edged with bright crimson, was sold for \$40.00 and never heard from again.

*Nellie Pleas* and her royal sisters appeared upon the scene many years before I began to plant seeds. The *Queen* should be considered the mother of these, as well as the later originations. The *Queen*, with its great clusters of golden-hearted blooms, was not hybridized since its blooms opened before any other peony in my garden. This may account for the fact that all the offspring produce flowers in clusters, and many bloom early. Many of the originations were much larger and far more beautiful than the parent. I had great confidence in the constancy of heredity, and I decided that in planting peony seeds the *Queen* should be the chosen parent. On account of insufficient room, I made the mistake of planting the seeds too thickly, which made it necessary to engage in constant thinning and replanting as long as I remained in my Indiana home, "The Pleasance". When seedlings are given sufficient room they reach the blooming stage sooner, and will increase rapidly as a rule. A far greater mistake was committed in stratifying the seeds in the open ground in the full sun. This required that the seeds be planted very early in the spring. A late frost came along and killed every seedling peeping above the ground. Had the freeze come a few days earlier, probably few or none would have been above the ground to be cut down by the frost. A still later frost might have caught and killed practically all the seedlings—"On what slender threads hang everlasting things." After the cold wave had passed, with the first warm days, the tardy ones came up, totaling less than 1,200 in all. Out of this comparatively small number of seedlings came every type, form and color yet produced from *White Swan* to *Opal* and *Jubilee*; from *Wild Rose* to *Lady Iris* and *Elwood Pleas*; from *Redbird* to *Gem* and *Gypsy Queen*, *Black Beauty*, and *Black*



Prince; from *Altar Candles* to *Dr. Pleas* and *Novelty*; and the large family of the most aristocratic little Japs filling the garden with their sweet fragrance. Admitting that there are good, better and best peonies, there is no one who will deny that any of these peonies growing wild would have thrilled the heart of a Burbank or a John Burroughs as never before. Why then should the majority be disturbed even if the seedlings are not all prize winners?

We turn now to the story of *Nellie Pleas*, synonyms *Multiflora*, *Admiral Dewey*, *General Lawton*. Noticing that *Nellie Pleas* was listed by Mr. Lovett at 50 cents, I bought it with others to restore my right to sell the same. When these bloomed, "*Nellie Pleas*" was late, small, with no resemblance to my production, except a similar color. Since I had ordered and paid for *Nellie Pleas*, I was entitled to sell it, but if this undesirable variety was being disseminated as the true variety, I did not wish to offer my variety by the same name. *Multiflora* appeared to me a very descriptive name, and attractive to patrons, and I unhesitatingly offered it under that name without a thought of ever being called to confession for so doing. It never appeared to me that it might make trouble for florists. Cutting a large clump into six divisions, two were left in the garden, the others were planted on the lawn with other divisions, 18 inches apart. There they remained, receiving no care, until they became a compact hedge of blooms so crowded that all had not room to open. They attracted the admiration of all who saw them. Persons on the highway stopped to gaze at the floral display. I realized that these plants would be greatly benefited by division and replanting. Having duplicates of all, I decided to sell those on the lawn so as to give me room to thin out and transplant from the garden where the peonies were equally crowded. Before offering *Multiflora*, I must know approximately how many divisions the four clumps would make. Each clump was found to have from 30 to 35 bloom stems. Each stem averaged 8 to 10 blooms, the largest measuring 7 to 9 inches with not a stamen showing. The petals of the smaller blooms were beautifully intermingled with golden stamens depending upon the size of the bloom, greatly enhancing their attractiveness. These were offered to a florist. I described them as best I could. I admitted that they were not of as delicate a color as others, but that the blooms were earlier, larger and silkier than any other peony borne in large clusters, and that their habit of bearing flowers in clusters enabled them to bloom for four weeks. My offer was accepted. When the plants were dug and the tips removed, the difficult task of cutting the divisions had to be met. In making up the order, one extra was given with each dozen. Before all were dug, I feared that the stock would run short on account of the large divisions and the extras. To make up the number ordered, I substituted from an unnamed plant which I labeled *Admiral Dewey*, with the hope that this popular name would attract patrons, and without a thought that this substitution would interest or affect any one else—"O wad some power the giftie gie us, to see ourselves as ithers see us, it wad frae many a blunder frae us, and foolish notion." I explained my dilemma to my patron mentioning the possible substitution. I am of the opinion that the unnamed variety above referred to as *Admiral Dewey* is the only genuine *General Lawton*.

(To be continued)

## A MINIATURE "MOUNTAIN" GARDEN

By Mrs. Fannie Mahood Heath, President, National Horticultural Society.

About many homes there is some small spot of ground that has been given up as well nigh hopeless. Such a spot may be made into a miniature "mountain" or other charming subject by the proper planning and selecting of plants that are to grow in such a situation. There are few spots so wet and soggy or so dry and hot that a variety of plants will not flourish there if proper plant material is selected. The greatest trouble is experienced in trying to grow plants where it is hot and dry. If the following plan is carried out, one may expect almost continuous bloom from snow to snow from dwarf plants included in the planting scheme. First dig the soil deeply and then outline your bed with stones so placed that the water will run into, and not away from it. Fill to the top of stones with soil made up of equal parts of leaf mould, sand and decayed sod. On top of this scatter a few more stones, and fill in more dirt until the stones are nearly covered. Your "mountain" is ready for the plants. But like all highlands these miniature "mountains" should have tiny depressions where moisture loving plants will flourish. At the very top, in a little pocket of sand, cacti,—*Mamillaria viviparus*; *M. missouriensis*; *Opuntia fragilis*,—and *Sedum acre* should be planted. *Tunica saxifrage*, *Sedum maximowiczii*, *S. kamtschaticum*, *S. stoloniferum*, in white, lavender and crimson, should be planted between the stones so that the growth will cover them. *Gentian affinis*, *Hypoxis erecta* (Yellow Star Grass), *Astragalus hypoglottis*, *Ranunculus glaberrimus* will thrive in moist depressions, and *Campanula fragilis*, *C. garganica*, *Oxalis violacea* (Pink Sorrel), *Allium reticulatum*, *Potentilla verna nana*, *Iris pumila*, *Scilla siberica*, *Viola pedatifida*, *V. pedata*, *Semprevivum rubicundum*, *S. Rubi. hybridum*, *S. Funckii*, *S. globiferum*, *S. tectorum* may be scattered about over the "mountain" where it pleases the eye. In the shade of some rock *Viola selkirkii*, and *Anemonella thalictroides* (Rue Anemone) will find a home. These plants are all entirely hardy and will come back year after year.

## NORTHWEST MIDLAND REGIONAL MEETING JUNE 3, 4, 5, 1925.

A regional meeting for the Northwest Midland was held at the home of President Fannie Mahood Heath, near Grand Forks, N. D., on June 3-5, 1925. Mrs. Mathilda C. Engstad, Regional Vice President of the Northwest Midland, was unable to be present on the first day of the meeting, and Mrs. Z. M. Stewart, of Banff, Alberta, Regional Vice President for Western Canada, presided. Mrs. Stewart, who had just returned from abroad, told of many interesting places visited in foreign lands, including her visit to Kew Gardens in England, and other notable Old World plant collections. Much of the time was spent in going over the extensive collection of hardy shrubs and perennial plants in the Heath Garden consisting of over 700 species and varieties. The grounds were gay with many bright-hued flowering perennials and blossoming shrubs. Notwithstanding the fact that the meeting was held so early in the season, there were 92 species and varieties of plants in flower. Since the typical garden in this region contains only about a dozen varieties, the visit



to the Heath Garden proved both enjoyable and instructive. The air was filled with sweet perfumes and vibrant with the songs of many birds. The day in the open was appreciated to its fullest extent.

Mrs. Engstad, and many others attended the second day of the meeting. A still larger number were present on the third and final day. Mrs. Engstad gave very interesting accounts of days spent in notable gardens which she had visited on her trips abroad. On the whole, the meeting was a most interesting and successful one. This is, however, only a foretaste of what our Regional Meetings will mean once we have Regional Botanical Gardens established in each of the various regions.

#### LUTHER BURBANK

It is with the deepest sorrow that we announce the death of an Honorary Fellow of the Society. On April 11, 1926, Luther Burbank, the beloved American horticulturist, died at his home near Santa Rosa, Calif. A comprehensive summary of his life's work will appear in a future issue of this periodical.

#### LOCAL ACTIVITY

##### GRAND FORKS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

At the annual meeting of the Grand Forks (N. D.), Horticultural Society in April, 1924, the following officers were elected:

Honorary President, Mrs. Fannie Mahood Heath.

President, Mr. A. D. Keator, State University.

First Vice President, Mrs. J. M. Gillette.

Second Vice President, Mrs. F. L. Goodman.

Sec'y-Treas., Prof. Edgar A. Baird, State University.

Directors, Mrs. J. E. Engstad, Mrs. J. J. Loomis, and

E. J. Lander.

As a result of discussion continued for two meetings, the local Society selected annuals and perennials considered most suitable for growing in the vicinity of Grand Forks.

Annuals: Cosmos, sweet pea, aster, nasturtium, pansy, zinnia, phlox and snapdragon.

Perennials: Peony, hollyhock, german iris, phlox, columbine, baby's breath, delphinium, shasta daisy, tulip and lily of the valley.

Mrs. Loomis gave an interesting and instructive talk from her garden experience on what plants to grow. Mrs. A. G. Leonard outlined future plans for activity of the Society.

The annual meeting of the Society on April 21, 1925, was held at the home of Dr. and Mrs. J. E. Engstad. The following officers for the ensuing year were elected:

President, Mr. E. J. Lander

Vice President, Mrs. Mathilda J. Engstad

Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. A. D. Keator.

At this meeting arrangements were made for the Regional Meeting for the Northwest Midland at the Heath Home in June.

##### GALESBURG HORTICULTURE AND IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY

C. Z. NELSON, Secretary

The Flower Show staged by the Galesburg Horticulture and Improvement Society on August 29, 1925, was a great success. The names of the exhibitors and the flowers contributed are quoted from the Galesburg local newspapers:

I. L. Pillsbury: Vase of 24 carnations, 4 different colors. Thirty-six roses, 3 types. These were blended with male fern fronds and Astibe Japonica and sprays of seven leading types of Canna.

Abel Boyer: 25 types of splendid Gladiolus.

Ralph J. Pommert: 28 types of Gladiolus. Some of them new and rare.

H. F. Drury: One large basket of individual Gladiolus and one large basket mixed with China Asters, Zinnia, Tuberoses and African Marigolds.

Amanda Landstrom: Large spray of China Asters, Aster Boltonia and double Heliopsis.

E. L. Giddings: Mixed vase of China Asters, Gaillardia, Phlox, Ageratum, Zinnia and perennial Helianthus.

J. R. Bursk: 20 varieties of the highest rated China Asters in the American symposium. Thirty-five types of frilled, double and single petunias, vases of Dahlia, Snapdragon, Zinnia and Geraniums. One spray of three types of Canna.

Nora Cox: Mixed vase of Giant Daisy, Gaillardia, Cosmos, Helianthus Decapetala and Euphorbia Marginata. One vase of white Dahlia.

Mrs. E. J. Ross: Two vases of Zinnia. One mixed vase of Zinnia Celosia Thompsonii, Giant Daisy, Aster Boltonia and Artemisia Annuua.

Mrs. C. A. Burkhalter: Spray of large and splendidly cultivated Cockscomb.

August Carlston: Vases of Dahlias and African Marigold, China Asters and Verbena. The Asters and Marigolds showed excellent cultivation and the Dahlias were of the best types.

Emily M. Nelson: 48 Dahlias, representing 12 leading types in the six divisions of Dahlias.

Mary E. Boutelle: Large spray of Snapdragon.

J. P. Welch: Large sprays of China Asters and Gladiolus.

Ora Burke: Vase of African Marigolds and Aster Boltonia. The Marigolds were remarkable specimens, showing skillful cultivation.

W. E. Terry, Sr.: Separate vases of Speciosum Lilies and Egyptian Lotus in two colors, blended with Forget-me-nots and Myriophyllum.

A. A. Anderson: Types of Egyptian Lotus, two colors. These two exhibits are a splendid example of what can be accomplished in aquatic gardening.

A splendid vase of Zinnias was contributed bearing no name.

The following three are school garden exhibits and show splendid skill, deserving due praise for the youthful exhibitors:

Carolyn Nelson: Bouquet of Canada Violets and spray of Gladiolus.

Morton Sherwood: Sprays of Gaillardia and Zinnia.

Wm. R. Nelson: Bouquets of China Pinks and sprays of Zinnia and Cosmos.

A practical joker who did not give his name nor leave his spray for exhibition, brought some "white snake root" and asked the society's botanist if he knew what they were. Upon being informed that it was *Eupatorium Agertoides* he disappeared. Other public spirited citizens to whom credit is due in making the exhibit a success are: The First National Bank; our two newspapers; O. T. Johnson Company, who furnished jars and jardinières. Kresge 5 and 10c Store, who furnished vases. McCreary & Son, who donated the display sign; College City Dairy, who furnished bottles; Atterbury Shoe Store and Jacobi Bros. and Mack who donated the boxes in which to pack the flowers for the hospitals.