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The Newsletter of the Oklahoma Horticultural Society

SPR 2001

Feb/Mar/April

DR. WELCH'S VISIT-A BLOOMING SUCCESS

During his recent visit to the Sooner State, Dr. William C. Welch, professor and extension landscape horticulturalist at Texas A&M University, expressed numerous times his appreciation for the invitation to lecture. He was incredibly impressed with the people he met and the vibrance of our horticultural society. Nearly 90 people attended the lectures each in Tulsa and Stillwater, and over 100 listened to the "Bountiful Flower Garden" lecture at the annual winter meeting in Oklahoma City.

Dr. Welch drew on his extensive knowledge of southern gardening and plant materials to help all of us realize the great diversity of plants which can be grown in Oklahoma. Recommending many plants which have "stood the test of

time", Dr. Welch touted the virtues of plants, which often grow unattended in old farmsteads and graveyards, noting: "if those dead people can grow these plants, then anyone can".

The lectureship series, underwritten in part by grants from the Kirkpatrick Family Fund, Oklahoma City Zoological Park, and the Oklahoma Horticultural Society was expanded this year to include Tulsa as well as Stillwater and Oklahoma City.

OKLAHOMA GARDEN FESTIVAL 2001

This first ever garden festival for Oklahoma was a huge success. 15,000 people attended the event which included 10 professionally landscaped exhibits. Other areas to visit were professional and non-professional horticultural and artistic divisions, educational exhibits, retail vendors, and educational workshops and seminars. Key-note workshops by Ken Charbonneau, a color consultant, and Eric Darden of Walt Disney World were filled to capacity. Both of these experts were very impressed with the show. Plans are already being made for Festival 2002 with Ann Ryan and Alan Payne as the co-chairs of this event. Mark your calendars for January 31st through February 3rd, 2002 and be prepared for another horticultural extravaganza. ...more on the festival on page 3.

Mailing address: OHS P.O. Box 770092 Oklahoma City, OK 73177

Web Page: <http://connections.connectok.com/okhorticulture>

The Benefits of being Sick

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Yes, there really are!

Despite having to miss the Oklahoma Garden Festival that turned out to be such a success, there were tangible benefits to having a flu bug.

- ▶ Much time was spent with my family, although not exactly quality time;
- ▶ A little of the extra weight that's been piling up over the winter was lost; and
- ▶ I didn't have to get out of bed in the morning. Staying in bed and sleeping late (actually for a couple of days) was permissible.

And now the real benefits – by the third day I was able catch up on some periodical reading. One magazine that is always enjoyable is the *American Gardener*, which we as members of Oklahoma Horticulture Society receive as a part of our joint membership with the American Horticulture Society. If you've already read the November / December 2000 issue you learned that.....

▶Southern England only receives 18 to 24 " of rainfall per year (less than Oklahoma City) and yet still has beautiful gardens with little or no supplemental watering. Well, obviously it's our heat, and that

▶Karl Forester's feather reed grass, my favorite grass, has been named as 2001 plant of the year.

Another highlight was the article on shrubs that have red berries. Included in the article was red chokeberry, (*Aronia arbutifolia* 'Brilliantissima') which grows well in the Tulsa area, has an attractive informal, multi-stem form; and is loaded with red berries. Because the berries are highly astringent birds won't have a thing to do with them, thus allowing the plants to retain the berries through the winter. Fall color is spectacular. The issue had an article on conifers native to North American, and included a tree – Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) – that we don't expect to find in Oklahoma. Did you know there is a beautiful 40' height specimen in Tulsa at Woodward Park? After reading most of the articles in the *American Gardener*, my recovery had begun.

My next reading endeavor included a stack of new plant catalogs, which always serve as both a learning experience and source of adrenaline to begin spring gardening. Three of my favorite catalogs are High Country Gardens (www.highcountrygardens.com), Plant Delights Nursery, Inc. (www.plantdelights.com), and the White Flower Farm (www.whiteflowerfarm.com). Each has excellent color photographs and descriptions of every plant in the catalog. The Plant Delights Nursery catalogs has especially unique plants, and, to say the least, the owner has a unique sense of humor that pervades the publication. My only problem with the catalogs is that I seem to have to order one of everything.

Isn't it great being ill? When nothing else can help, reading horticulture can be great therapy. Aren't we plant lovers lucky! Hopefully, none of you will be sickly this spring and summer because the OHS has several exciting events in which to be involved. Instead of telling you what they are, I'm going to let you find out by reading this issue of *Horticulture Horizons*.

Sincerely,

Joe Howell

TLC AD

TREASURER'S REPORT

FEBRUARY 21, 2001

CHECKING ACCOUNT BALANCE:

\$773.64

FEBRUARY 21, 2001

SAVINGS ACCOUNT BALANCE:

\$10,306.17

Sign up now for the 'Garden Tour for Connoisseurs'

If you haven't already heard, this year's "Garden Tour for Connoisseurs" will be Saturday, June 2. It takes about 70 people to fill three shifts at six gardens, so we need to get the sign up list going now. Many of you have already signed the sheet at recent meetings which gives a good start for filling the shifts. But more volunteers are needed.

Jeannie Spence (751-8799) and Janice Johnson (842-1779) will coordinate the volunteers this year. So please call them and lend a hand. I know that some of you like to work with friends, so you need to inform the coordinators now before they start assigning gardens and shifts to others. Even non-member friends and relatives can work with you on the garden tour. You can also request to work the morning or afternoon shift as your schedule warrants.

If you have not worked the tour in the past, we hope you can do so this year. Everyone seems to have a good time helping. It is always a good way to get to know other members better too. Remember that you will be notified of your assignment in May and not earlier as it is a juggling job to fill in all the gardens.

**Garden Tour for Connoisseurs Volunteer coordinators:
Jeannie Spence (751-8799) Janice Johnson (842-1779)**

OKLAHOMA GARDEN FESTIVAL 2001

The Oklahoma Horticultural Society booth at the Oklahoma Garden Festival received countless compliments and rave reviews from those who attended. We think it went a long way in showing that our society has something for everyone.

We would especially like to thank the committee who designed and built the booth. They are: Warren and Karen Filley, Al and Nancy Fernandes, Hugh and Jennifer Stout, George Vaclavek, JoAnne Vervinck, Darleen Michael, Sharon Beasley, and John Fluitt.

We would also like to thank all the volunteers who manned the booth, for they are the people who gave it a personal touch. They are: Warren and Karen Filley, Al and Nancy Fernandes, Hugh and Jennifer Stout, Jeanie Spence, Shirley McFarland, Leslie Tippet, Ora Hare, Olen and Teresa Thomas, Dean and Wanda Manderscheid, Debbie Robertson, George Vaclavek, JoAnne Vervinck, Darleen Michael, Kathleen Ryan, Teresa Hoehner, Charlene Swalwell, Shirley Kennedy, Patsy Lee, Sharon Beasley, George and Louise Milacek, Vicky Michalik, and Lyle Henry.

Next years event promises to be bigger and better. We highly recommend getting involved in this project. Thanks again to all,

Hugh and Jennifer Stout
Co-Chairs/Oklahoma Garden Festival

WELCOME NEW OHS MEMBERS

STEVE DOBBS
VIAN

BRENT SUTTLES
NORMAN

JEAN HENDERSON
EDMOND

HARRY FRANCIS
OKLAHOMA CITY

FRANK GILSON
OKLAHOMA CITY

HAROLDINE HINDS
TULSA

ROSEMARY BROWN
OKLAHOMA CITY

KRISTINE DIXON
TULSA

JACKIE AND SID
POGUE
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JOYCE BATEMAN
OKLAHOMA CITY

MACIE JACKSON
EDMOND

PAMELA SUE HAHN
EL RENO

CAROLYN LANEY
OKLAHOMA CITY

JOHN & MARGARET
OKLAHOMA CITY

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OKLAHOMA CITY

TIMOTHY MASOPUST
OKLAHOMA CITY

SUE ANN JOHNSON
OKLAHOMA CITY

A BRIEF SPRING

by Charlene Swalwell

One day in January, my grandson, gazing mournfully out of the window at one of the season's worst days, said wistfully, "Grandma, do you remember how we used to grow our own watermelons they were sooo good." Since he was talking about last summer, I did of course remember, but it seems so long ago to him, that he clearly had his doubts that it would return again in his lifetime. But then, he is only six and I am—well, much older and usually time goes by too fast, but on that bleak day, summer seemed a long time ago to me, too.

Which brings me to the real reason our Garden Festival was so great: to go there to escape, if only for a short while, the long slow end of winter, into a dream world of flowers, shrubs and grasses in imaginative settings. It brought to life and enriched that always-perfect garden that lives in the mind of every gardener. This inner vision expanded to include those wooden bird houses and the bottle cable (among other things) from John's garden, the masses of hyacinths, those upscale garbage can planters (said to be French laundry tubs), a fountain as smooth and shining as a mirror come-to-life, those terrific plaster columns in our club booth, that perfect evergreen, those bright cyclamen ...all those bits of the whimsical, the ethereal and the fantastic.

For it was, of course, fantasy. The best of gardens will never be weedless, let alone have chrysanthemums, begonias, roses and daffodils in bloom all at the same time. No real garden will ever produce those perfumes so varied and heady that we were in danger of being overcome, as were Dorothy and her pals in that field before the Emerald City.

But, it was the fantasy that made it wonderful. One knows that the festival had to be a financial success, that lots of people had to buy tickets, that vendors had to vend a lot, and plantmen had to attract new customers, for them to be persuaded to come back next year, work those long weary hours to create magic once more. So that we can know again the joy of cheating winter and stepping through the looking glass into a fantasy spring, that will refresh our hope that this will at last be the spring that the garden-in-our-mind will actually become reality.

And next year my grandson gets to go.

HOW PLANTS GOT THEIR NAMES

8th in a series by Warren Filley

Common name: **LILAC**

Botanical Name: *Syringa* Family name: Oleaceae
USDA Cold Hardiness Zones 2-7

AHS Heat Zone 4-8

For those of us who have "lived in the North" lilacs remain one of the most beloved flowering shrubs. Dr. Welch, during his recent visit, commented to me that lilacs do not grow well or flower in the College Station area. What a shame, as I would find it hard to go through the spring without the delightful highly fragrant sweet scented flowers of this shrub. There are specimens in my yard which come from plants in my grandfather's yard in Nebraska.

The word lilac comes from Arabic Laylak, or the Persian Nylac, both of which mean blue. Of course now the name lilac means an entirely different color than blue. On the other hand, the botanical name *Syringa* comes from the Greek word *Syrinx*, meaning "a pipe". The pithy stems could be easily hollowed out to make pipes. At the time they were introduced from Turkey to the Greeks, the plants were used to make pipes.

It is felt that Ogier Ghiselin De Busecq brought back the first lilacs from Turkey to France after visiting the court of Suleiman The Magnificent in Constantinople. Pierre BeLon termed the lilac flower a "fox's tail" and by the mid 1500's these "fox tail lilacs" were spreading throughout Europe. By the end of the 19th century, during the Franco-Prussian War, Victor Lemoine introduced a new double lilac. These lilacs were termed "French lilacs" and are still widely grown today. During the 1900's new hardy lilacs came from Asia, among them the delightful pink "Miss Kim".

Interesting to note that although the flowers are heavily perfumed, the wood itself has a sweet fragrance when burned as well. Flower colors include white, pink, lilac, blue and purple. The plants grow well in sun to partial shade and do best in a well drained soil with neutral pH. It is indeed fortunate that in Oklahoma we can grow both this lilac and the "Southern lilac" or Crepe Myrtle (*Lagerstremia*) almost side by side in the same yard.

Note: During the OHS business meeting at the Annual Winter Meeting on February 24, the by-laws were amended as recommended in the Winter issue of the Horticulture Horizons.

WICHITA TRIP - A FUN DAY

On March 3, members of the Oklahoma Horticultural Society joined by master gardeners in the Oklahoma City area, boarded a bus with the promise of a warm, rainless day (at last) from the local weathermen, for a trip to Wichita, Kansas, to enjoy the Wichita Garden Show. In no time it seemed, we were jumping out of the bus and eagerly rushing into the Century II Convention Center to see it all.

With a theme of "Garden of Dreams" for the show, it appeared the landscape designers all had the idea to reach for the stars in their dream gardens. Most of the large displays towered above the visitors whose eyes surveyed towering vistas that resembled scenes from the mountains of Colorado. Water falls cascaded down rocky waterways. And a dream garden would not be complete without drifting mists and fog here and there.

Some parts of designs must have been over 20 feet high and the design titled Jacob's Ladder may have exceeded that with the two, odd spindly trees at the apex of the design which our own JoAnne Vervinck deciphered as being the Jacob's ladder reaching toward Heaven. Appropriately that design incorporated variegated Jacob's Ladder plants for ground cover. (Made a note that I wanted one of those plants.)

And if you were not accompanied by your sweetie to the show, you might have been missing him or her when viewing the creation titled Romantic Dream. Another quite elevated design with clearings at the base to accommodate a player Grand piano putting forth romantic tunes just around the corner from a rustic timber and twig gazebo sheltering a table set for an elegant evening and covered by a cloth interestingly smothered by attached galax leaves.

What was regrettable is that you could not walk up to that elegant setting and gently brush your hand across such an unusual table cover. Unlike the designs at our Oklahoma Garden Festival last month, only one of these designs drew you into it with a path through it. Others had to be enjoyed from the perimeter of the designs.

If you were not satisfied viewing the landscaping from the floor, you could climb up the spiral, metal staircase of an eight foot high, sturdy, 28 foot wide, octagonal, raised timber deck. Quite an interesting structure held together by wooden pegs rather than screws or nails. If you have more money than you know what to do with, and want your yard to be outstanding, you can plop down \$80,000 to \$100,000

for that particular structure and throw a big barbecue for the Horticulture members.

A wide variety of plant materials was seen in the different exhibits. Some unusual plants that I took names of were: Takosu Juniper, similar to a Hollywood Juniper with a bunchy look to the arrangement of the needles on the branches; Green Spire Euonymus with very upright branches and leaves like stair steps up the branches; an unusual lavender called 'heterophylla' that has silver, felted leaves; a variegated Vinca minor 'Sterling Silver' with a wide gold center and green margins; a petite mat-forming plant called Houstonia caerulea that is three inches tall with small pale lavender flowers; a horse chestnut, 'O'Neill Red', with blooms that were pale pink; and, of course, the variegated Jacob's Ladder. I am convinced that I am supposed to have a 'Harry Lauderdale' contorted mulberry bush after seeing them everywhere at the Oklahoma City and Wichita shows.

We should be proud that four of our members were the sole judges at the Wichita show - JoAnne Vervinck, John Fluitt, Steve Owens and Russell Studebaker. In addition, the last two were also speakers at the Wichita show. As I understand the philosophy for judging garden shows is to bring judges from out of state to avoid favoritism.

As if viewing the flower show was not treat enough, our wonderful trip leader, Wanda Manderscheid, worked in a stop at DeRee Nursery in Wichita. Even though it is a bit early to expect much selection at nurseries, DeRee's was a treat as perennials grown in hoop houses were emerging from winter dormancy enough to adequately tempt us. And guess what - I found a variegated Jacob's Ladder, not to mention a few other choice selections. Now you can't beat a day like that to get heightened spring fever. --Sharon Beasley

OKLA. ALLERGY CLINIC

OKLAHOMA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY'S OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2000 OFFICERS

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Dean & Wanda Manderscheid see brd 2002

Education & Publications

Victoria Michalik - see brd 2002

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Finance

Cathy Connel - see Treasurer

Here is a list of the new and current Officers and Board of Directors and Committees with their phone, fax and e-mail addresses.

If you wish to become more involved in the OHS, or have ideas and suggestions please call or email them.

OHS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Oklahoma Horticultural Society
P.O. Box 770092
Oklahoma City, OK 73177

OKLAHOMA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY EVENTS 2001

- March 27** 'GROW ALONG WITH YOUR GARDEN', by Nancy Fernandes Monthly Meeting:
Will Roger Garden Center; 7 PM
- March 31** 'SOUTHERN LIVING GARDENING SCHOOL'; 9:00 am - 2:15 pm. Crystal Bridge/ Myriad
Botanical Gardens Register early for discount. \$55.00 until March 25, (\$70 after) 297-3903
- April 21 & 22** 'TULSA GARDEN CLUB 51st ANNUAL GARDEN TOUR'; Saturday 10am -5pm, Sunday 12 - 5 pm;
Tickets available at the Tulsa Garden Center 2435 S. Peoria, phone (918) 746-5125
- April 24** 'GOOD VEGETABLE VARIETIES FOR OKLAHOMA' by Paul Johnson, OSU County Extension Agent;
Monthly Meeting at Will Roger Garden Center; 7 PM
- MAY 19** 'BENTONVILLE HISTORIC HOMES & GARDEN TOUR'; Tickets and Information:
Peel Mansion & Museum, 400 S. Walton Blvd., Bentonville, AR phone (501) 273-9664
- MAY 22** 'CONSTRUCTING EUROPEAN TROUGHS' - Come and construct your own European Trough
Monthly Meeting at Will Roger Garden Center; 7 PM watch for further details
- June 2** 'GARDEN TOUR FOR CONNOISSEURS' - OHS sponsored one-day self guided tour of six beautiful gardens
in the Oklahoma City area. More details to be announced.
- June 9** 'FESTIVAL IN THE PARK' Will Rogers Park. Multifaceted horticultural event.
- June 9 & 10** 'WILDLIFE HABITAT GARDEN TOUR' - Saturday 9 am -5 pm, Sunday 12- 5 pm; Tulsa; Native plants
vendors at gardens on tour; Contact Ron Jeffris, 6447 S. Indianapolis Place, Tulsa 73136
phone (918) 492-5022 email ronjeffris@webzone.net
- June 26** 'TREES AND SHRUBS WE SHOULD KNOW; NATIVE NEWCOMERS & RELATIVE UNKNOWNNS',
by Dave Edwards Monthly Meeting at Will Roger Garden Center; 7 PM
- July & August** - NO MONTHLY MEETINGS
- September 23** 'OHS FALL ANNUAL MEETING'; OBGA In Stillwater
- October 5 & 6** 'GARDEN GALA', Sponsored by the Oklahoma Zoological Park
- December 8** 'OHS CHRISTMAS PARTY'; More details to come...
- 2002** **January 31- February 3** 2nd 'OKLAHOMA GARDEN FESTIVAL'; Myriad Convention Center

**INFORMATION,
CALL 330-9150**