



The Trillium

Piedmont Chapter
North American Rock Garden Society
Chapel Hill, Durham, Raleigh, NC

Why I Remember

By Anne Raver

What makes one garden so memorable, while others fade from the mind almost as soon as you run home to see if the bluebells have come up. After more than 25 years visiting gardens and writing about them, first for *Newsday*, a daily on Long Island and then for the *New York Times*, it's interesting to ask that question.

Of course, the answer is different for each person. Some gardeners, no doubt neat and orderly themselves, are bound to make geometric spaces, like those at Sissinghurst or the perennial garden at Wave Hill, where the proverbial bones are so good that plants can billow into the paths, and roses and clematis can weave themselves up through evergreens, or even, as at Mottisfont Abbey, in England, where Graham Stuart Thomas brought his rose collection, training some up into the old apple trees.

Others, and I include myself among them, are more drawn to the curving trail through the Douglas firs, carpeted with trillium, erythronium and vanilla leaf, at the Chase Garden in Orting, WA, south of Seattle (open to the public through Garden Conservancy; chasegarden.org), or to the great swaths of blue, first from the glory-in-the-snow and scilla in March, then by the Virginia bluebells in April, that have spread by the thousands beneath the tall poplars and oaks at Winterthur, the Dupont estate near Wilmington, Delaware.

Any memorable garden has a deep sense of place, as does the garden in Norwich, Vermont, created by Bill Noble and Jim Tatum, among the ruins of an old farm in the foothills of the White Mountains. The dairy barn had collapsed, weeds and brambles grew everywhere, but the two men just lived with the place for a while, pruning the lilacs and roses around the Greek Revival house. As the site crept into their souls, they planted Lombardy poplars to frame the meadow, and began to turn half of the old vegetable garden over to a mixed border of shrubs and perennials. Bill, the director of preservation for the Garden Conservancy, experiments with the textures and forms of purple barberries and sand cherries, the varying blues of delphiniums and eryngiums. He has coaxed Himalayan blue poppies into bloom in the shady nooks of the old barn foundation, and the great ruffled leaves of Himalayan rhubarb unfold among the rocks. I fell in love with Bailey's Gold (*Sedum kamtschaticum* 'Weihenstephaner Gold'), when I saw it rambling over an old elm trunk that



Photo by Anne Raver

Garden of Bill Noble and Jim Tatum

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Windcliff Garden, created by Dan Hinkey and Robert Jones

Photo by Anne Raver

once shaded the barn. We picked puntarelle, a bitter Italian green, from the perfectly weeded vegetable garden, and delivered them over to Jim, an English scholar, musician and chef, who tossed them with lemon, olive oil and anchovies. We had dinner and wine on the screened porch, just as the last rays of sun left the meadow, and the Lombardy poplars stood over us like ghostly sentinels.

I spent a similarly magical afternoon and evening at Windcliff, the five-acre garden of natives and exotics, water and stone, created by Dan Hinkley and Robert Jones, on a cliff overlooking Puget Sound and Mount Rainier rising to the south.

Many of the plants Dan Hinkley tried at Windcliff foundered in the cold wet winters that have recently rolled over the Northwest. But what remains is a vigorous meadow of many of the species he has collected on his travels as well as old favorites: *Lobelia tupa* from Chile, whose scarlet flowers bring in the hummingbirds, the drooping midnight blue flowers of *Agapanthus agapanthus inapertus*, from the Drakensburg, the tawny plumes of *Cortaderia fulvida*, from New Zealand (not to be confused with invasive pampas grass). All these flowers, mixed with soft grasses, seemed to intensify the blues of sky and water just beyond the cliff.

Kniphofia, crocosmia, melianthus, just to name a few, seem to thrive in the harsh sun and wind. Lavenders, to Dan's surprise, didn't do well. He thinks it may be the salt in the air.

At first, he tried massing the plants, Oehme van Sweden style, but then realized he likes to spread them out, in order to see each individual plant on its own.

Robert, an architect, designed the one-story house, which hunkers down low on the land, with a variety of views - from the eagles that nest in the tall firs, the sun glowing orange through the madrone trees. Sometimes, if the clouds lift off Mount

Rainier, you can watch the sun set right behind the mountain, framed by a Port Orford cedar *Chamaecyparis lawsonia* 'Imbricata Pendula') which leans over, for the moment at least, in a perfect oval. There are intimate views, too, like the glass doors that look out on this little courtyard full of shade-lovers, including *Fatsia japonica* (Taiwan), *Helwingia chinensis*, *Schefflera delavayi*, and *Stachyurus salicifolius* (all 3 from Sichuan) around a stone basin. The tall running bamboo is a Mark Bullwinkle sculpture.



South Garden at Windcliff

Photo by Anne Raver



Raymond Jungles' Garden in Coral Gables

Photo by Anne Raver

I remember the gardens that take me on a journey, even if it circumnavigates a mere 200 square feet, like Abbie Zabar's 15th floor aerie in midtown Manhattan. Others, like Duncan and Julia Brine's six-acre garden in Pawling, N.Y. are literally places to get joyfully lost in.



Abbie, an avid member of the NARGS in New York, tended for years a 1,000-square foot garden on two levels atop a Fifth Avenue penthouse. So paring down her collection almost a decade ago, to fit in one-fifth the space was a creative act in itself. Much of the space is narrow -- on the north side, you turn sideways, following the vines of Boston ivy, to the northwest corner, where an alpine garden, all in tiny pots and troughs, is home to tiny gems like *Androsace*, which forms little cushions of pink or white flowers when it blooms, tiny sandworts and dianthus, succulents like *Orostachys* and *Sempervivum*, especially the webbed species, *S. arachnoideum*, one of Abbie's favorites, all thriving in perfectly drained gritty compost, top-dressed with the crushed slag of old tar roofs.

So while an alpine meadow in New Hampshire can be nice, the view from this one, of New Yorkers down on the streets below, scurrying in and out of shops and taxis, walking their dogs, lugging their groceries, holding onto their children, is refreshingly unlike some de-

serted outcropping of granite up in New Hampshire.

But the heart of this garden beats in the little forest that Abbie has made on the northeast corner by pruning three potted hawthorns (*Crataegus*), into a high canopy of cool green. That the shapes of the hawthorn leaves complement those of the Boston ivy is just one example of Abbie's eye for detail, and love of the little things that escape most people's notice.

In contrast, Duncan Brine, a former filmmaker, and his wife Julia, a painter, tend a voluptuous garden of trees and shrubs, perennials and annuals that seem to tumble down the hill from the old farmhouse, which was once part of a dairy farm, to the marsh below.

Exotics grow close to the house, like the *Yoshino cryptomeria*, 15 feet tall and six feet wide, that stands right by the front door. Callicarpas, viburnums and shrub dogwoods, lacy elderberries and oakleaf hydrangeas are all interwoven in a three-dimensional tapestry of colors, forms and textures. Variegated sweet gums, red-berried *Viburnum wrightii* give way to tall stands of silphiums and *Herbstonne rudbeckias*, then the path ducks beneath an arbor covered with Dutchman's pipe and purple elderberry and on down the hill into what seemed to me one rainy day



Photo by Anne Raver

Leslie Close's kitchen garden on the East End of Long Island.

(Continued from page 3)

more than two years ago, to be an ocean of plants. Old oaks and sugar maples mark the old pastures where they once shaded the cows, rather than the wild ginger, Japanese bugbane and *Kirengeshoma palmata* that now ramble over their roots.

These are only a few of the gardens I will talk about in March, including an other-worldly paradise of stone, water and native plants, designed by Raymond Jungles, tucked behind a perfectly normal street in Coral Gables, Florida, and out on the East End of Long Island, the bountiful, satisfyingly geometrical kitchen garden created and tended by Leslie Close, who loves her self-seeding hollyhocks, but edits them carefully, for color and form. And then there is Roald Gundersen, who gardens his forest in western Wisconsin, where watercress grows wild in the clear springs. He shimmies up the young trees in his woods, and bends them into the shapes he needs for curved balconies and porches of the houses he builds from whole small trees and the beautiful golden wood of standing dead elms.

These are the gardens I remember and long to return to, again and again. ❧

Book Review: *Reciting a Legend*

by Pam Beck

The daunting task a biographer faces is to objectively and rationally document a noteworthy life, and an author's detachment is far more successful when the subject of their research was either little known or had been long deceased. When Dr. Bobby J. Ward wrote *Chlorophyll in His Veins, J. C. Raulston, Horticultural Ambassador*, BJW Press, Raleigh, North Carolina, 2009, he had the onerous challenges of reflectively memorializing his recently lost friend while historically profiling a contemporary horticultural legend well-known in gardening circles around the world.

With painstaking chronological research worthy of yet another graduate dissertation, Bobby Ward spent four years traveling the country, visiting the places where Dr. J. C. Raulston had lived and worked, in order to better understand what transformed the inquisitive little boy from rural Oklahoma into one of the most influential and beloved plantsmen of our times. Ward meticulously interviewed not only family members and childhood friends, but also hundreds of nurserymen, university colleagues, former students, and green industry professionals to find that everyone who had ever met J. C. Raulston had a touching story that they were anxious to share.

Taking the volumes of information Ward gathered about Raulston and integrating J. C.'s own legacy of thousands of pages of his private dairies and letters, tour notes, and published newsletters, along with eighty-eight thousand photographic slides that J. C. had left behind, Ward fashioned a fascinating book that attempts in just 332 pages to capture Raulston's trials and triumphs during his dervish life and meteoric career.

Since this biography endeavored to be completely honest, there are topics that may astonish the reader, but each difficulty in Raulston's life was treated with the utmost respect, backed by meticulous interviews. For example, the interdepartmental struggles Raulston endured in order to get the arboretum at North Carolina State University off the drawing board may be eye-opening, especially considering its current importance and prominence. Ward steered this testy chapter into perspective by presenting an unbiased description of the personalities involved in the decision-making, set within the timeframe that fashioned their thinking.

Ward crafted an accurate and intimate biography that chronicles J. C. Raulston's numerous accomplishments for all time; but on another level, this book is a revealing compilation of stories about the gentle, generous, and surprisingly shy man, whose greatest passion was always plants. Even in selecting the title of this book, Ward quotes Raulston's long-time friend, Marion Redd, who shared, "J. C. always loved to talk about plants. I used to think he had chlorophyll in his veins."

Bobby Ward is past president of the North American Rock Garden Society, and a member of the local Piedmont Chapter of NARGS. His book can be purchased directly from Ward, either via his website www.bobbyward.com or by contacting him at 930 Wimbleton Drive, Raleigh, NC 27609. ❧

Lessen Your Footprint through Sustainable Gardening



by Helen Yoest

The term “sustainable” gardening seems to have become the buzz word in the gardening community encompassing “green”, “organic”, and “waterwise” gardening practices. Simply put, sustainable gardening is the gardening practice of conserving an ecological balance by avoiding depletion of natural resources.

Gardening sustainably is not and does not need to be an all or nothing proposition. You can begin with one practice and build from there. What’s key is to be aware of what practices you perform and think about them before continuing on with business as usual. It is also good to understand the available options and grow from there.

Most sustainable gardening practices can be delved into deeper, but a good place to begin is with these lessons: growing the right plant in the right place, practicing water conservation, bed preparation and maintenance, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM.)

Right Plant, Right Place

Putting the right plant in the right place will save you and your resources. Many plants can be grown outside their recommend growing range with regards to sunlight and water requirements. In doing so, however, more time and energy is wasted - water, human energy, time.

Planting a moisture loving plant in dry bed is counter-productive. Study and know your site. Plant moisture loving plants in a moist area or be prepared to provide. Plant drought tolerant plants in a dry area, and so on. Many gardeners like to push hardiness zones, but it is not advisable to push plant needs. While you can nurse a shade loving plant planted in the sun with water, it’s not sustainable.

Planting native plants and trees is the ultimate example of the right plant in the right place dictum. Planting these helps to re-establish the local ecosystem. Native plantings have already adapted to this climate, and the native wildlife have adapted to these plants.



Photo by Helen Yoest

Practicing Water Conservation

Water conservation can be achieved from many aspects of garden design and harvesting. The goal for water conservation is to keep as much of the water on your property as possible. This can be done so by reducing impervious surfaces, slowing falling rainwater enough so as it doesn’t go to the storm drains, building rain gardens, and to water less and smartly.

Waterwise: Most of us don’t want to be denied a plant based on watering needs. But be prudent. Garden water wisely. Understand your garden’s watering zones. Dragging a hose past 10 drought tolerant plants to water a thirsty one is neither sustainable nor practical.



Photo by Helen Yoest

A waterwise garden design is comprised of three gardening zones: oasis, transitional, and xeric. The “oasis zone” is still the area closest to the water source. But now these sources can be drain spouts, rain barrels, the outlet of a French drain, and the area around the front door to easily water your container plants with say, the “wasted” water used indoors.

The “transitional zone” is the area away from the house about midway from the home and the end of the property. Plantings here should be sustainable requiring only occasional supplemental water. Typically, these areas are island beds, driveway beds, or raised beds.

The “xeric zone” is at the property’s perimeter. These plants should be tough requiring no supplemental water. This area can be filled with dependable drought-resistant plants.

The key is to select plants that don’t require supplemental watering or if they do, they can be watered with water collected from nature or clean water from inside the home that would otherwise be wasted.

Water Smart: Water plants directly to the root zone by hand or using soaker or drip irrigation. Overhead sprinklers are not sustainable due to the water lost through evaporation and wind. Water according to plant needs, not a rigid schedule. Water infrequently, but deeply.

Bed Preparation and Maintenance

Soil: We need to accept the soil we’re dealt or be prepared to amend. In our area of the Piedmont region of North Carolina, there is clay and sand. In the heart of Raleigh, it’s all clay. As you move outside of Raleigh, you’ll find sandy soil. It is important to read plant labels. If the label recommends planting in well drained soils, and you have clay, just know some amending will need to occur. In any garden soil type, you cannot go wrong adding more organic matter.

Fertilizer: Reduce or eliminate fertilizer use. If you must use chemical fertilizers, be sure to closely follow the directions on the bag. Using more fertilizer than directed will not help your plants grow any more. Over fertilizing also increases the risk of not working its way into the ground becoming available as runoff to pollute local waterways. Begin a compost pile to create your own organic fertilizer.

Mulching: Covering garden beds with mulch is one of the best things you can do for your garden. Used generously, mulch breaks down to add nutrients to the soil, helps retain moisture, moderates the soil temperature, improves soil texture, suppresses weeds, and looks great; and it really makes the garden look tidy. Mulch all uncovered soil for water retention, weed control, and to improve the soil’s structure.

Weeding: Weeds compete for water with you desirable plants. Even if the sight of weeds is acceptable in your garden, removing them will help stop the spread of environmental weeds. Find out what plants have become weeds in your area and, if you have them, weed them out or safely kill or contain them.

Composting: Composting garden and kitchen waste. In Raleigh, we have separate yard waste pick up. If yard waste is rid properly, it won’t end up in the landfill. But if you have the room to compost, then you



Photo by Helen Yoest

**Piedmont Chapter NARGS
2010 Program—through April**



March 27, 2010

Note: It is the fourth Sat. in the month

Anne Raver

“What Makes a Garden Live on in Memory”

Garden writer, New York Times

Reistertown, Md.

April 17, 2010

Helen Yoest

"Lesson Your Footprint Through
Sustainable Gardening Practices"

Garden Writer and Speaker

Raleigh, N.C.

May 15—Spring Picnic

A Garden Tour to the Triad to visit:

Paul J. Ceiner Botanic Garden (hosted by-
Todd Lasseign)

Wyatt LaFever's garden (Kernersville) and
Graham Ray's garden (Greensboro)

don't have to buy it back to use in your own garden. If more fertilizer is needed, using organic sources only, like aged manure, compost tea, and those that are fish- or seaweed-based can be used.

There are a few approaches to building a compost. Choose whatever type suits your garden — a three-bay heap for a large property, a classic upside-down-bin style to place in an average garden, a tumble-type bin that neatly sits on a paved area or a bucket to keep in your kitchen.

Compost systems can be either hot or cold. Hot requires regular turning maintenance. Cold takes longer to break down, but if you have the room, it is the easiest way to compost. In cold composting, the kitchen and yard waste only needs to be piled. After it reaches a certain height, start another. When that one is full, go back to the other. Hopefully it will be ready to use when you are.

Mature compost ends up as a delightful humus to use as a soil conditioner in your sustainable garden.

IPM Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an effective approach to pest management using the most economical means with the least possible hazard to people, property and the environment.

IPM is not a single pest control method, but rather, a series of pest management evaluations, decisions and controls. It's the judicious use of pesticides.

IPM follows a four-tiered approach:

- Determine action threshold. Sighting a single pest doesn't necessarily mean control is needed.
- Monitor and Identify Pests. Not all insects, weeds, and other living organisms require control. Many organisms are innocuous and even beneficial. IPM programs work to monitor for pests and identify them accurately, so that appropriate control decisions can be made in conjunction with action thresholds.
- Prevention. Rotating between different crops, selecting pest-resistant varieties, and planting pest-free rootstock. Also planting in areas to provide good air circulation prevents problems with pests.
- Control. Effective, less risky pest controls are chosen first, including highly targeted chemicals, such as pheromones to disrupt pest mating, or mechanical control, such as trapping or weeding. If further monitoring, identifications and action thresholds indicate that less risky controls are not working, then additional pest control methods would and could be used, such as targeted spraying of pesticides. Broadcast spraying of non-specific pesticides is a last resort.

As individual gardeners, we can each use these lessons to do a small part to help lessen our footprint on the environment with our gardening practices. We gardeners make up large number including more than 7 million new gardeners each year. Each of us can make a difference by avoiding the depletion of our natural resources. ♪

Copies of

***Chlorophyll in His Veins: J. C. Raulston,
Horticultural Ambassador***

by Bobby Ward

will be on sale at the March 27th meeting.

A portion of the book sales will
benefit the Piedmont Chapter.

\$27.00 includes N.C. sales tax.

Piedmont Chapter Meeting

Note Permanent Location Change:

JC Raulston Arboretum
Ruby McSwain Education Building

***March 27*, 2010, 9:30 a.m.**

Anne Raver

**"What Makes a Garden Live on
in Memory"**

Garden writer, New York Times
Reistertown, Md.

The Trillium, Newsletter of the Piedmont Chapter
The North American Rock Garden Society
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OTHER SIGNIFICANT POSITIONS:

Sept. Plant Sale Manager: Kirtley Cox

Refreshments: Gwen and Maurice Farrier

Bring Goodies to Share

If your last name begins with the letters indicated below, please consider bringing something to share.

March Sp-Z

April

Anyone/All

I'LL EARN YOUR TRUST

Whether you're downsizing and hoping to find a buyer who will love your home and garden almost as much as you have, or are looking for that perfect spot to finally start the garden of your dreams - I can help! I have now worked with four members of our group to do those very things and I would love the opportunity to work with you.



I have over 30 years of experience selling homes and running plant businesses - I feel I am qualified to work with serious plant lovers who are selling their beloved gardens or finding the perfect new one. It's always stressful buying or selling, but I can handle many of the details that will make the whole process smoother.

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