



The Trillium

newsletter of
the **Piedmont Chapter** of the
North American Rock Garden Society

Vol. 12, No. 2

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Mar.-Apr. 2002

A new book . . .

The Correspondence Between Katharine White & Elizabeth Lawrence

by Emily Herring Wilson

I believe that one of the experiences writers share with gardeners is a heightened sense of discovery, for whether we are tracking down a person or a plant, the satisfaction is equally keen: when we come to a stopping place, we say "Here it is (often to a plant or to a piece of paper, since writers and gardeners are apt to talk to themselves), here is what I have been looking for." Whether the object of a gardener's desire is a new little bulb (as was frequently the case with Elizabeth Lawrence) or a new biographical subject (as is the case with me), gardener and writer are united in the importance they give to the personal quest. The fact that obstacles stand in the way of perfect fulfillment for gardeners and writers also unites us, and we become masters of patience, as seasons and deadlines come and go.

Continued on page 2

Other societies and nurseymen, too . . .

USDA Regulations Threaten NARGS Seed Exchange

by Joyce Fingerut

It appears that the U.S. Department of Agriculture will be enforcing the requirement of a point-of-origin phytosanitary certificate for seeds entering the United States. Such a certificate threatens the import of garden seeds, such as those received from foreign members who donate to the NARGS seed exchange. It also affects other plant societies as well as nurseries and individuals who import or purchase seeds from abroad.

I offer below an outline of points that can be raised when petitioning the USDA-APHIS-PPQ for a change in the regulation that requires a point-of-origin phyto-sanitary certificate for seeds entering the U.S. I have had help in this from NARGS members Tom Stuart and Carlo Balistrieri.

To begin with, an explanation of the "alphabet

Continued on page 4

Our March Meeting of NARGS

Saturday, March 16, 2002

10:00 a.m., Totten Center

N.C. Botanical Garden, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Richard "Dick" Lighty

Kennett Square, Penna.

**"Spice for the Gardener-Variation
in Native Plants"**

Members last names "R" through "Z," bring
"goodies."

Our April Meeting of NARGS

Saturday, April 20, 2002

10:00 a.m., Totten Center

N.C. Botanical Garden, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Fred Case

Saginaw, Mich.

"North American Terrestrial Orchids"

Members last names "A" through "H," bring
"goodies."

My search as a biographer for the lives and work of North Carolina women of achievement led me to discover Elizabeth Lawrence, author of *A Southern Garden* (1942), which has remained the jewel in her crown, also studded with *The Little Bulbs* (1957), a "tale of two gardens," hers and that of Carl Krippendorf in Ohio; *Gardens in Winter* (1961); *Lob's Wood* (1971); and posthumous publications of *Gardening for Love* (ed. Allen Lacy, 1987), *Through the Garden Gate* (ed. Bill Neal, 1990), *A Rock Garden in the South* (ed. Nancy Goodwin with Allen Lacy, 1990), and *A Garden of One's Own* (ed. Barbara Scott and Bobby J. Ward, 1997).

Readers of *The Trillium* may think me dull to have taken so long to get to know Elizabeth Lawrence, but then, surely there are experienced gardeners who don't recognize all of the plants in another's garden? Elizabeth Lawrence is my mentor in this regard because there was nothing she relished more than tracking down information she felt she ought to have known, but didn't. Nor was anyone more generous in sharing what she knew and grew.

More than a decade ago, in collaboration with Margaret Supplee Smith, I began researching women's lives from pre-history to the end of World War II, which resulted in the publication of *North Carolina Women: Making History* (UNC Press, 1999). I began my research with an outline in my head that included searching for subjects in the traditional categories in which women had achieved—not the doctor, lawyer, Indian chief variety, but rather homemaker, teacher, nurse, community activist, and (I thought to add to the categories I already knew) gardener. Every sign lead to Elizabeth Lawrence as the quintessential gardener, and after writing a short biographical essay about Lawrence for inclusion in the history, I could not put her down. There was something mysterious, perhaps unknowable, about a woman whose life seemed better suited to the nineteenth century than to the twentieth as her life and work were at home and in her own backyard. As soon as I had written about her for the women's history book, I began working on her biography.

Then, as a gardener discovers one plant while looking for another, I discovered the letters of Katharine S. White, a long-time editor and later garden writer at *The New Yorker*, and Elizabeth while I was working in Elizabeth's papers (at Northwestern State University of Louisiana, where she (Elizabeth) had been "discovered" by an alert archivist working on the papers of Caroline Dormon). Reading the White-Lawrence letters felt as if I had entered a private garden, and everywhere I turned I discov-

ered something new. The personal voices of letter writers speaking across time (the letters began in 1958, and ended with Katharine White's death in 1977) and place (Katharine lived most of the year in the cold climes of Maine, Elizabeth in Charlotte, North Carolina) spoke to me. I set aside my work on the Lawrence biography and spent a year working on their letters (Katharine left hers to Bryn Mawr College, her alma mater). The most difficult task was reading Elizabeth's difficult handwriting and trying to affix a date to her mostly undated letters. Then I integrated both sides of the correspondence (more than 166 letters) into a text on the computer, made some editorial choices (mostly leaving the letters as they were written) and annotated a large number of allusions to cited books, plants, friends, and places. Anyone who gardens and anyone who writes will understand when I say that for a year it was a labor of love.

In April 2002, Beacon Press in Boston will bring out *Two Gardeners/Katharine S. White and Elizabeth Lawrence: A Friendship in Letters*. It has been an exciting and arduous quest, from finding the letters to beginning to feel that I might recognize the authors, neither of whom I had ever met. Making a book is something like making a garden: you draw up lists of what you are looking for, which of course always need revising; you study catalogs and place your orders, which of course sometimes aren't what you thought you were getting; you plant your new treasures (some thrive, some languish, some die), and you wait to see what you have done. In terms of editing the White-Lawrence letters, now in production as I am writing this essay, I am in the waiting period. While I wait for the book to be printed, let me tell you about the letters. (Beacon Press is also bringing out a new edition of Katharine White's *Onward and Upward in the Garden*, a book of her garden essays from *The New Yorker*, which includes the original introduction by E.B. White, her husband.)

In 1958 Katharine and E.B. were leaving their Turtle Bay apartment in New York City and their long careers at *The New Yorker* to retire permanently to a saltwater farm in North Brookline, Maine, which they had owned since 1933. Although both would continue working for the magazine from their offices in a comfortable old farmhouse, each had particular interests: E.B. or "Andy" White looked after the barn and the farm animals; Katharine's province included houseplants and flower borders that were battered but not defeated by Maine winters. As a way to adjust to semi-retirement and to fulfill her lifelong interest in gardening, Katharine wrote a review of garden catalogs, appearing in March 1958.

Elizabeth Lawrence read the piece and wrote an enthusiastic fan letter. (They both had a mutual friend in Joseph Mitchell, a North Carolina native and *New Yorker* writer.) Elizabeth began at once making suggestions about what catalogs, books, and plants might interest Katharine White. Katharine responded with appreciation, and thus began a correspondence that lasted until a few weeks before Katharine died in Maine in the hot summer of 1977.

The letters were a way of gardening for Katharine, who had bad health for most of those years, and for Elizabeth they were a way of being helpful about gardening, a subject she could not resist. In turn, Katharine's praise of Elizabeth's books helped boost Elizabeth's standing with editors. Both writers along the way consoled one another about the difficulties of writing and of aging. The letters constitute conversations between two friends: "I wish you lived next door," Elizabeth wrote to her friend in Maine, "and I would fill your garden up." She did send boxes of plants from her Charlotte garden, especially some of Mr. Krippendorf's hellebores ("seedlings of his seedlings"), nandinas, hoopskirt narcissus, and ivies, as well as leaves of fragrant sweet box and myrtle "for your nose."

And so it is an occasion for celebration among gardeners and writers alike to welcome the publication of the letters of these two remarkable women. Lawrence wrote in *A Rock Garden in the South*, "All gardeners are great letter writers. My correspondence has been cultivated as diligently as my garden, and its blossoming has brought me as much pleasure." I believe that their letters will bring others pleasure as well.

I am now at work on the biography of Elizabeth Lawrence (Linda H. Davis has published Katharine White's biography, *Onward and Upward*). I would welcome letters from anyone who would like to talk with me about Elizabeth Lawrence. Discovering her for myself has been one of life's great joys, and in discovering her I discovered the garden waiting to be cultivated in my own back yard.

Two Gardeners/Katharine S. White & Elizabeth Lawrence: A Friendship in Letters, edited and with an introduction by Emily Herring Wilson (Beacon Press, Boston, Mass. Spring 2002), 256 pages, hardcover \$24.00. Illustrations.

[Emily Herring Wilson is co-author of *North Carolina Women Making History* (UNC Press 1999). She writes poetry, biography, and directs public humanities programs. She has taught literature and creative writing at Wake Forest University and at other universities. Her address to communicate with her about Elizabeth Lawrence is 3381 Timberlake Lane, Winston-Salem, NC 27106; email ehwilson_5886@msn.com.]

Spring 2002 Open Gardens, Ads, Member Professional Services

John Monroe, Architectural Trees

919 620-0779, fax 919 620-8580

archtrees@aol.com; www.archtrees.com

Rare tree nursery in north Durham county growing unusual varieties of ornamental trees. Some natives also available. We offer design service, delivery and installation of our material. Nursery is open Fri, Sat, Sun and Monday (Spring), beginning March 9, and Sat, Sun and Monday (Fall). Directions on website

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(919) 942-1665; email jcowan@intrex.net

Specializing in design of residential, year-round gardens, as well as the pathways and sitting areas for garden enjoyment. Joy has a Master of Landscape Architecture degree in 1993 and has worked as a landscape designer for the Town of Chapel Hill and as a designer for Niche Gardens.

Karen Suberman, Barefoot Paths Nursery

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Suzanne Edney, Custom Landscapes, 919-387-

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Diane R. Kibbe, Procurements for Garden &

Home, 919-968-1600. Plant locator, container garden design and installation.

Kai Mei and David Parks, Camellia Forest.

Open House: March 29-31, April 5-7 and April 12-14, 2002; Fridays and Saturdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. & Sundays 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Directions to the Nursery: From Chapel Hill take Hwy 54 West towards Graham. Go 2 miles past Carrboro Plaza and watch for the Exxon gas station, go one block and turn right on Carrie Road. AT 0.2 miles down Carrie Road, take the left fork, we are the first driveway on the right. Telephone (919) 968-0504; http://www.camforest.com/

soup" of the acronyms used:

USDA-APHIS-PPQ means the United States Department of Agriculture - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service- Plant Protection and Quarantine. This arm of the government is charged with the protection of the nation's agricultural and environmental health and welfare. The agency is a line of defense against imported diseases that could potentially *infest our crops and our surroundings* and decimate industries, a worthy purpose by anyone's standards. There are problems, however, with how they propose to accomplish its mission.

We need to bring attention to the fact that enforcement of regulations contained in 7CFR PART 319, specifically sections 319.37 THROUGH 319.37-14, requiring a point-of-origin phytosanitary certificate for seed entering the United States from other countries has unforeseen consequences. We have been told that we cannot ask for an exemption from this regulation to allow small packets of seed to enter the U.S. without a phytosanitary certificate and, consequently, we must petition for a change in the regulation itself.

One petition with several names will not be as effective as several separate letters. In this case, mass is critical! We need to demonstrate that these regulations do indeed have a much broader impact than APHIS imagined. It will take a great many letters to persuade them of this. Contact your local garden centers, favorite mail-order nurseries, and regional botanic gardens and encourage them to write as well.

Email is not considered to be correspondence and form letters are not taken seriously. A simple, direct, one-page letter stating a few points, clearly and forcefully, will demonstrate your interest in the matter. Those of you who are heads of organizations or businesses and wish to write a longer petition may contact me privately. All letters should be addressed to:

Michael Lidsky, APHIS-PPQ
4700 River Road, Unit 141
Riverdale, MD 20737

In our letter to the USDA-APHIS-PPQ, we (NARGS) are stating that: Enforcement of this regulation will have unintended and negative effects to many sectors of the horticultural community:

(1) Seed houses will be severely damaged or forced out of business;

(2) This is an unreasonable restriction on international trade, counter to the WTO (World Trade Organization) Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Certificates that "Sanitary and phytosanitary measures shall not be applied in a manner which would constitute a disguised restriction on international trade."

(3) International plant societies and botanic gardens will be restricted from sharing seed through their seed exchanges.

(4) Private trades between gardening friends will be in violation of the law unless accompanied by a phyto-sanitary certificate.

(5) The resulting loss of seed diversity will lead to financial losses in the plant industry and a concomitant weakening of plant stocks, through inbreeding and perpetual vegetative propagation.

(6) The recommendation to consistently enforce the requirement for certificates was formulated without a risk assessment; that is, it was assumed, without a scientific basis, that even small packets of seeds, from ornamental horticultural origins, would pose a risk to agriculture and the environment; nowhere has this been proved or even suggested.

Above all, treat the recipient of your letter with respect. Assume that he has at least as much knowledge and intelligence as you do; you are introducing him to your perspective on this question, not assailing his credentials. State your case clearly, logically and impersonally. Don't whine. Your personal losses will not make a compelling argument; broader losses to sectors of the gardening industry and science might.

I welcome your contributions of further ideas and points that might be raised with USDA-APHIS-PPQ either by specific sectors of our community (commercial vs amateur societies, for example). We need to create critical mass response, so that they will understand that there is a huge number of people/businesses/organizations that are affected by the policy.

Organize a chapter write-in at your next meeting (don't forget to bribe them with coffee and

goodies). Run articles in your chapter newsletters. Inundate Lidsky with mail! From conversations held, I do believe that he and Dr. Tschanz, who are in the same office, agree with our position. But it's up to us to give them the ammunition (the facts and the arguments) to present to whomever initiates the action.

The future of the seed exchanges and the diversity in our gardens and garden centers depends upon the removal of these restrictions. Actually, all the future fun of gardening depends on winning!

Go get 'em!! And please send me a copy of any communication you make to APHIS. Thank you.

[Joyce Fingerut is President of the North American Rock Garden Society; she lives and gardens in Stonington, Conn. She is the co-author with Rex Murfitt of Creating and Planting Garden Troughs, published by B.B. Mackey Books of Wayne, Penna. (1999).]

Upcoming Speaker ...

**Michael Dirr at
Sarah P. Duke Gardens
Durham, N.C.
Winter Lecture Series**

**Tuesday, March 5, 2002
7:00 p.m.**

Where: At the Doris Duke Center (the new building at the Sarah P. Duke Gardens). Cost to the general public will be \$15. He'll also be conducting a walking tour of the Gardens the next day (March 6) from 2-4 p.m. (That event will also cost \$15.)

Dirr is the author of "Manual of Woody Landscape Plants"; a new book, "Dirr's Trees and Shrubs for Warm Climates" (Timber Press 2002); and "Dirr's Hardy Trees and Shrubs" (Timber Press 1997).

There'll be a plant auction after his lecture (to benefit Duke Gardens), and he will be bringing plants he has selected to be auctioned.

For further information, contact Nancy Oliver at 919-668-1704 or mail noliver@duke.edu.

Piedmont Chapter Spring Picnic & Potluck at Karen Suberman's Garden

May 16, 2002

Noon

224 Henley Road, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Telephone (919) 933-7467

Bring a tasty potluck food to share and
A chair or a blanket to sit on.

We'll also have the traditional plant swap. If you have plants you'd like to swap with chapter members, bring them along as well.

From Raleigh and Cary: Take 64 to Jordan Lake; cross the lake and take the FIRST paved right onto Big Woods Road; go 6mi. and it dead ends into Jack Bennett. Take a left and go up the hill for approx. 1.25 mi. to first paved road on left, Henley. Turn left and go .3mi to yellow mailbox on left; turn rt. onto gravel road between 2 pastures and end up in the nursery.

From Chapel Hill: Take 15-501 South towards Pittsboro; go 7 miles to Jack Bennett Road (on left); take left; go 0.6 mile to Henley; take a right onto Henley and go 0.3 mile to driveway across from yellow mailbox to nursery.

Join NARGS, the National Organization

Join the **North American Rock Garden Society**. Benefits include a subscription to the *Rock Garden Quarterly*, seed exchange, garden book purchases at a discount, study weekends, and annual meetings, as well as other benefits. Membership in the Piedmont Chapter is separate from NARGS, the national organization. Membership is \$25/year.

As a new member you will receive a free copy of the NARGS publication, *A Rock Garden Handbook for Beginners*.

Send payment to Jacques Mommens, Exec. Secretary of NARGS, P.O. Box 67, Millwood, NY 10546. Or on the Internet: www.nargs.org.

Upcoming meetings & symposia . . .

The International Aroid Society's 2002 Summer Extravaganza: "Aroid Thrills & Tropical Frills"

July 26-28, 2002 in Raleigh, North Carolina

Calling all aroid geeks and tropical plant enthusiasts—this one's for you! The weekend gets started with an International Aroid Society's "members only" private garden tour and dinner party at Raleigh's own "aroid-er extraordinaire," Alan Galloway, and to those of you who know Alan, he doesn't just let anyone drive up that driveway of his, so this is a real aroid treat. If you aren't a member of the wonderful IAS, here's your chance to join and hobnob with aroid enthusiasts from around the world.

Saturday morning will be spent at the "Aroid Center of the Universe," our very own, Plant Delights Nursery, with a guided tour of the behind-the-scenes aroid research collection and trial areas, along with a personal tour of the tropical collections at PDN. Yes, Tony will be present, and yes, Tony will be sharing his unending knowledge of aroids and other tropicals, and yes, you can shop 'til you drop, or at least until lunch, and then it's off to visit the tropical-infused private garden of canna/banana breeder, Randy Salter . . . Philodendron and Monstera and palms; oh my! You'll need time for rejuvenation afterwards, so it's back to the hotel for a quick break before starting the evening events.

The evening will begin with socializing and strolling the grounds of JC Raulston Arboretum, followed by a hearty banquet at the JCRA's new education center, and highlighted by an entertaining talk by guest speaker "Jungle John" Banta who will present "Tropical Plants for Temperate Gardens." John studied botany at the University of Michigan, has traveled and collected plants the world over, and his appreciation of aroids spans decades. We'll wrap up the night with an aroid and tropical companion plants auction hosted by auctioneer, Tony Avent; money raised will go towards the IAS and JCRA.

Sunday morning will begin with a casual meeting over breakfast at the hotel to talk about, well, aroids, and the Aroid-L and Arisaema-L email

newsgroups; the rest of the day will be open for on-your-own visits to visit Sarah P. Duke Gardens, the North Carolina Botanical Garden, JC Raulston Arboretum, to revisit PDN, or to scope out some of our local nurseries and garden centers.

The meeting is hosted by The International Aroid Society, Plant Delights Nursery, and the JC Raulston Arboretum.

Who to contact:

For meeting and registration info: Alan Galloway (Co-Chairman, IAS Summer Extravaganza 2002), P.O. Box 37456, Raleigh, NC 27627; phone 919-881-2008; email: alan_galloway@bellsouth.net

For general info: Petra Schmidt (Co-Chairman, IAS Summer Extravaganza 2002); phone 919-772-4794; email: petra@plantdelights.com

On-line registration information: International Aroid Society - www.aroid.org.

3rd Eastern Native Grass Symposium North Carolina Botanical Garden & the Friday Center Chapel Hill, N.C.

October 1 - 3, 2002

Hosts include the North Carolina Botanical Garden, N.C. State University, and natural resource agencies (both state and federal).

he symposium covers topics on biomass and biofuel production, coastal grassland management, grass buffers, nursery production, public education, rights-of-way management, wildlife habitat and diversity, prairie and savanna restoration—and much more. The conference will include speakers in concurrent sessions, exhibitors, and posters.

For information, contact Johnny Randall at the N.C. Botanical Garden, Chapel Hill (919) 962-0522, email jrandall@email.unc.edu.

Book Review . . .

Charles Dudley Warner. 2002. *My Summer in a Garden*. Introduction by Allan Gurganus. New York: Random House (Modern Library Gardening Series). 101 pages, paper. \$11.95.

by Bobby J. Ward

My Summer in a Garden, first published in 1870, is a collection of nineteen pieces originally written for *The Hartford Courant* by its associate editor and publisher Charles Dudley Warner (1829-1900). The recently issued paperback from Random House has a generous, new introduction by North Carolinian Allan Gurganus, whose paen to Warner, easily a standalone piece, introduces us to Warner's musings about the pleasures of the soil. As Warner says, "The love of dirt is among the earliest of passions . . . Mud-pies gratify one of our first instincts. So long as we are dirty, we are pure."

Warner's observations on gardening are warmly personal and eloquent. His ode to the onion demonstrates: "The onion in its satin wrappings is among the most beautiful of vegetables; and it is the only one that represents the essence of things. It can almost be said to have a soul. You take off coat after coat, and the onion is still there; and, when the last one is removed, who dare say that the onion itself is destroyed, though you can weep over its departed spirit? If there is any one thing on this fallen earth that the angels in heaven weep over more than another, it is the onion."

His wry humor is timeless, such as his observation that plumbers would rather work by the hour than by the job, curiously "forgetting" tools they must take the time to retrieve. You'll smile at Warner's ambivalence towards his cat, Calvin; on the one hand admonishing him not to devour birds, but then justifying the animal's actions with "Let us respect the cat. He completes an edible chain." Then there are such *bons mots* as "it is not what you get out of a garden, but what you put into it, that is the most remunerative." Or, this: "The most humiliating thing to me about a garden is the lesson it teaches of the inferiority of man."

One of the pleasures in reading Charles Dudley Warner's *My Summer in a Garden* is his affirmation that it is okay to break a Commandment when weeding the vegetable patch, especially for such intruders as devil grass and that "fat, ground-cling-

ing, spreading, greasy thing" called pusley (probably a troublesome sort of purslane). Other irritations include uninvited cows with large feet, pecking chickens "straddling about in their jerky, high-stepping manner," and young boys who steal fruit, all of whom should be shushed away, or in case of a small child, given a dose of paregoric, "for they are not good to eat."

The newspaper-column-length essays in *My Summer in a Garden* are in stark contrast to the formality of Warner's post-Civil War, Reconstruction, and now dull political pieces from the same period. His writing output was prodigious, particularly in the last 30 years of his life, as he also penned articles for *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, and *Scribner's Monthly*. Let's hope the publication of *My Summer in a Garden* will spur interest in some of the lesser known pieces (these can be found on the Internet at <http://www.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/enl311/warner.htm>, along with a concordance to his writings.) Such pieces as "In the Wilderness (How I Came to Kill a Bear)," "How Spring Came in New England," and "Being a Boy on Horseback" might be worth revisiting.

Warner's exclusive Nook Farm neighborhood in Hartford, CT, was quite a literary enclave. His neighbors were Mark Twain (with whom he wrote the novel *The Gilded Age* in 1873) and Harriet Beecher Stowe (*Uncle Tom's Cabin*). Drop-ins at the garden for lemon ice cream and jelly-cake included President U.S. Grant. Does it get any better than that?

Michael Pollan (*The Botany of Desire* and *Second Thoughts*) is the editor of Random House's new Modern Library Gardening series. Three titles, in addition to the Warner, also have been released: Margery Fish's *We Made a Garden*, Czech writer Karel Capek's *The Gardener's Year*, and Eleanor Perenyi's *Green Thoughts*. Other out-of-print titles are planned.

Erratum

Because of an editing error in the article by Paul Jones in the Jan.-Feb. issue of *The Trillium*, Linda Erdman's place of employment was incorrectly stated. Linda is employed by Carolina Nurseries of Moncks Corner, S.C.

"Les wilderness" of the Carolinas . . .

The French Wanderer: André Michaux

by Sandra Ladendorf

[Diary entry May 15, 1795] "During the night my horse strayed away. The 16th, Sun. the 17th and 18th were spent searching for my horse. The 19th bought another horse for the price of fifty dollars . . . *Magnolia tripetala* abounds on the banks of Noley Chukey."

This excerpt from André Michaux's journal typifies the daily life of our early plant explorers here in America. Each day in the wilderness was fraught with difficulties, dangers, and delight. For Michaux, Bartram, Fraser, and other 18th century botanists, the delight came when they encountered a luxuriant stand of a familiar plant like *Magnolia tripetala* or found something new, something they couldn't identify, like Michaux's "new arbuste with toothed leaves" which languished unidentified among Michaux's herbarium sheets in Paris until 1839, when Asa Gray found it and named it *Shortia*.

We know quite a lot about the work of André Michaux, but very little about the man. We have no portrait, not even a description. Portraits do exist of his son, François-André; including one by Rembrandt Peale at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. If one assumes, "like son, like father" then André Michaux had a pleasant face, neither handsome nor ugly. François-André looks like an agreeable man.

It is through the pages of André Michaux's journal, the terse and sometimes cryptic notes written by firelight as he camped in the American wilderness, that we can begin to know André Michaux. We can guess; we can surmise.

He must have been extraordinary, that French peasant, that farmer born in 1746 at Satory in Versailles. Although his formal education ended at age 14, he had studied Latin and Greek, and according to all reports, he had an amazing facility for languages. In *Lost Heritage*, Henry Savage, Jr., says that Michaux's wanderlust began at age 14 when he translated Quintus Curtius's description of Alexander's conquest of eastern lands and then dreamed of seeing those exotic places.

But he settled into the conventional life of a young farmer. When he was 23, he married the girl next door, Cecile Claye, and continued to care for his younger siblings and to farm the family acres which he had inherited.

His life changed dramatically within a year when his young bride died in childbirth leaving him with

a son, François-André. Michaux was devastated. Then, according to Savage, he became acquainted with Louis Guillaume Lemonnier, court physician at Versailles and professor of botany of the King's garden. On his own land near the Michaux farm, Dr. Lemonnier was experimenting with plant breeding and the culture of exotics, particularly imports from America. Michaux studied, experimented, and learned. His renewed zest for life focussed on plants, plant collecting, and travels to far-off lands.

He began by studying botany under Bernard and Antoine Laurent de Jussieu at Trianon for two years. Then he went to Paris to study at the Jardin du Roi where he soon was given the job of plant collector.

His first expeditions were modest—to England and then to the wilds of the Auvergne and the Pyrenees. After that he was sent to Persia and spent the next three years exploring the ancient lands of the Mid-East. Just how far Michaux traveled is unclear—one source suggests that he followed the travels of Alexander as far as India.

His skills with languages became evident while he was in Persia. Not only did he quickly learn that language, but he became knowledgeable enough to complete a French/Persian dictionary during those months. All this while collecting innumerable herbarium specimens, packing up boxes of seed, and having an occasional adventure, such as the time friendly tribesmen found him naked and bleeding on the desert after he had been beaten and robbed by marauders.

After he returned to Paris, it was not long before Count d'Angerville, director of the royal parks and gardens, asked him to go to eastern North America. The forest reserves of France had been severely depleted during the battles with England; so Michaux was asked to seek out, study, and report about American trees that might be suitable for reforestation.

André Michaux sailed from France in September 1785, accompanied by his son François-André, then 15; a gardener, Pierre Paul Saunier; and a servant. They arrived in New York on November 14th and Michaux immediately set to work.

Michaux must have been a man of unusual courage, curiosity, and energy. These facets of his personality were evident during his Persian expedition and again during his first days in North America. Within three days, he was in New Jersey, collecting. A week after his arrival, he had employed several laborers and was off to Elizabeth-town to collect seeds and trees. During December he sent five boxes of seed back to France, including seeds from the red and white oaks, American chestnut, tulip tree, locust, liquidambar, laurel, azalea, vaccinium and

others—plus a cage of eighteen "partridges."

Initially, Michaux intended to start a garden in New Jersey, a garden that would serve as a holding station for trees and plants to be shipped to France. At that time, aliens were not allowed to own property in that state, but thanks to a special act by the General Assembly of New Jersey, he was granted the right to own no more than 200 acres, to be used only as a botanical garden.

He bought acreage for the New Jersey garden but soon became disenchanted with the climate and headed south, leaving Saunier and the servant to handle the New Jersey activities: collecting, growing, and shipping. Michaux continued to support Saunier with seeds and money.

Late in the fall of 1786, Michaux bought 111 acres near Charleston, South Carolina, and the garden he developed there became his headquarters for his remaining years in America.

His output was prodigious. Between 1785 and 1793, he is credited with shipping sixty thousand plants and ninety boxes of seed to France. Both the Charleston and New Jersey nurseries were used as places in which to grow material until ready for shipment.

All of these trees and seeds were collected as he slowly explored and botanized his way around the eastern United States, and even into Canada, reaching northward almost to Hudson's Bay on one trip.

Michaux is credited with traveling more than 3000 miles during his collecting trips. That doesn't sound like much to contemporary Americans who can zip across the entire United States on super-highways in less than two and a half days. But Michaux did all of his miles on horseback or on foot, frequently cutting his way through impassible forest or following a guide over minimal Indian trails.

As indicated in his diary at the beginning of this article, he did have a good deal of trouble with his horses, over the years. That notation was dated 1795, after ten years in this country and evidently he still had not adopted Bartram's method of "belling" his horse before bedding down at the campsite. Terse notes throughout the journal pages mention horses lost, stolen, or strayed. For a collector trying to carry hundreds of seedlings back to Charleston from Virginia, Tennessee, or the mountains of North Carolina, a horse was all important.

He faced very real dangers. While he was seeking rare flora, he had to beware of the fauna. His notes mention opossum, bear, deer, buffalo and raccoons, and many birds. On one trip, his guide was badly mauled by a bear. Mountain lions also ranged the mountains of North Carolina during those years. And Michaux lived in continual fear of stepping on snakes. Indeed, he records killing a yellow, red, and black banded one which might

have been the deadly coral snake (or its harmless mimic, the scarlet king snake). He mentions killing moccasins and other snakes.

Hostile Indians were also a danger during some of his explorations. Sometimes he would have to wait for days until enough armed men could get together to make a particularly dangerous crossing. Seeking shelter with settlers was common on Michaux's journeys—for the haven, for food, and for protection.

One can extrapolate from Michaux's cryptic notes about people. It's apparent that he was one of those special men who was comfortable with all types of people, and who moved readily from one level of society to another. He could comfortably dine with George Washington at Mount Vernon, where he brought seeds from LaFayette. He could camp in the wilderness with an Indian guide. He visited American colonists, Irish, German, and other settlers on the frontier; they saved news and held his mail for him. Joseph Kastner in *A Species of Eternity* says the settlers called him "the French wanderer." From the back woods, he could then visit Bartram to exchange botanical information and materials, dine with Jefferson, or be comfortable having tea with ladies on the lawn of the Florida governor's mansion.

In 1789, political matters intervened in the life of this French botanist. He heard news of the French Revolution and soon felt its direct impact. His funds were cut off. During the rest of his years in America, he supported his work and his travels by exhausting his own patrimony. Interestingly enough, although Michaux came to America as a king's man, and although the new republican government refused to support his researches, he became an enthusiastic, even ardent, republican. Such an ardent republican that one night when he was seeking shelter on his journey after his host exhibited vehement royalist feelings, Michaux refused to break bread with him. (He did spend the night under the man's roof, however, to protect his botanical specimens, which gives an indication of his priorities.)

His journal pages dated August 30, 1794, are also indicative: he climbed to the top of Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina with his guide Davenport and wrote, "Reached the summit of the highest mountain of all North America and with my companion and guide, sang the Marseillaise and shouted 'Long live America and the Republic of France, long live Liberty, etc.'"

We learn from his journal about his interest in rocks, soils and plants: "The 2nd of April *Epigea repens* in full bloom as on previous days. On several individuals all the female flowers were without rudiments of stamens while on other individuals all the flowers were hermaphrodites."

As he traveled, he was always experimenting

and learning: "Having nothing to do, I made ink with gall nuts which I gathered on the Oaks in the vicinity of the spot where we were camped." Or later, "I had supped the previous evening on Tea made from the shrub called Spice-wood. A handful of young twigs or branches is set to boil and after it has boiled at least a quarter of an hour sugar is added and it is drunk like real Tea. This beverage restores strength and it had that effect for I was very tired when I arrived."

Michaux also brought material and information to America. He is credited with educating the mountain people in the uses and virtues of ginseng. Also, through his Charleston garden, he introduced many valuable ornamental plants into the United States: *Ginkgo biloba*, *Albizia julibrissin*, and *Lagerstroemia indica*.

Although he ranged extensively up and down the eastern part of the United States, he botanized most extensively in the mountains of North Carolina. He returned again and again to Roan Mountain, Grandfather Mountain, and to the other peaks in the Carolinas that Michaux called "les wilderness." According to David H. Rembert, Jr., who wrote *The Carolina Plants of Andre Michaux* in the June 1979 issue of *Castanea*, Michaux is the authority for twenty-six genera, one hundred and eighty-eight species and four varieties of Carolina plants.

Michaux's days of American botanizing came to an end in 1796. His money was completely depleted. After an abortive attempt at organizing a western expedition, interrupted by a political contretemps caused by Citizen Genet, Michaux sailed for France with a great accumulation of botanical material. His ship was wrecked near Amsterdam, he almost drowned and much of his material was lost or badly damaged.

When he reached Paris, he found that few of his sixty thousand trees remained. Marie Antoinette had had many of the trees shipped to her father's palace in Vienna, and those trees that had remained in the gardens in France were devastated at the time of the rebellion.

He was given a small piece of land on which to garden and a little money—not his back pay for the preceeding seven years. He continued his botanical work and during the next few years produced two books, *Histoire des Chenes de l'Amerique* 1801 and *Flors Boreali-Americana*, published posthumously in 1803. Both books were beautifully illustrated by the Redoutes. The book about oaks in America describes thirty-six species. The flora is unique on two counts. It was the first flora to be written about United States's plants and every plant described by the author had been personally collected by him.

In 1800 Michaux joined an expedition to Australia but he left the group in Madagascar where he

worked as a botanist until he died of a fever on November 13, 1802.

His son, Francois-Andre, who had accompanied Michaux on his American travels for four years before he was sent back to France to study medicine carried on much of Michaux's work during the next decades. He was sent back to America by the French government to do further work on trees. He was ordered to sell the Charleston garden, which he did in 1803. (The New Jersey garden eventually became the property of the Saunier family.)

François-André gave his father's journals to the American Philosophical Society and later left a bequest to that society which it received in the 1870s after the death of his wife. That money has been used for oaks and oak research, over the years.

[Sandra Ladendorf lives in Salinas, Calif. She was one of the founding members of the Piedmont Chapter of NARGS. She was chapter president as well as NARGS national president. This article originally appeared in the Bulletin of the (North) American Rock Garden Society 42:1 (Winter) 1984. Reprinted with permission of Sandra Ladendorf.]

André Michaux Symposium Being Held in Belmont, N.C.

A major international symposium featuring the life, works, and times of André Michaux, noted French explorer, collector and botanist, is being planned for May 15-19, 2002, in North Carolina.

The symposium will feature various talks and presentations, workshops, field trips, historical reenactments, and other activities that, altogether, should appeal to a variety of audiences. Host organizations include Belmont Abbey College, Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, and Gaston Day School. It is expected that the symposium proceedings will be published.

For information contact: Jeanne Miller, Michaux Symposium Coordinator. P. O. Box 942 Belmont, NC 28012; telephone (704) 868-3181

Or email: miller@dsbg.org.

Also on the Internet: www.michaux.org.

**Piedmont Chapter of NARGS
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**Piedmont Chapter of NARGS
Positions of Responsibility**

Refreshments & Hospitality: Gwen and Maurice Farrier, 4205 Arbutus Dr., Raleigh, N.C. 27612; (919) 787-1933.

Fall 2002 Seedling Sale: TBA

**Remaining Programs
for Piedmont Chapter of NARGS
Spring 2002**

March 16, 2002

Richard "Dick" Lighty

Kennett Square, Penna.

"Spice for the Gardener—Variation
in Native Plants"

April 20, 2002

Fred Case

Saginaw, Mich.

"North American Terrestrial Orchids"

Spring Picnic & Potluck

Saturday, May 19, 2002

noon

See directions on page 5

All Piedmont Chapter NARGS programs are held at 10:00 a.m. on a Saturday in the Totten Center, N.C. Botanical Garden, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Speakers arranged by Mike Chelednik,
Programs Chair

Tony Avent Earns Award

The January/February issue 2002 of *The American Gardener*, a publication of the American Horticultural Society, lists the AHS Great American Gardeners Award Winners for 2002.

Piedmont NARGS Chapter member Tony Avent has won the "Commercial Award-Individual" category "for commercial contributions to gardening by an individual."

Congratulations to Tony, Michelle, and the Plant Delights crew.

Next Issue of *The Trillium*

The next issue of *The Trillium* will be mailed out in July 2002. It will contain a list of speakers for the Fall-Spring 2002/2003 programs. Some great speakers have already been lined up by our program chair. Membership renewals will also be included in the Summer 2002 issue of *The Trillium*. Have a good gardening spring and summer.

The Back Page . . .

Chair's Comments by Marian Stephenson

I'm really looking forward to our chapter Spring Picnic in May and pleased to entice you with the promise of a unique treat at this year's event. Karen Suberman has kindly offered her farm, garden, home and nursery for the picnic and she mentioned that the entertainment will include peacocks and llamas. I'm game. I haven't seen a peacock up close in a long time. Nor a llama either for that matter. The date is May 19 at noon in Chatham County. See page 5 for directions. I hope you will join us for this special outing.

To remind you: we are getting closer to the NARGS national meeting that will be on our turf in May 2004. As the host organization, we have a big job to do. Let's make guests think North Carolina is the gardening center of the East coast! Okay, that's not so hard. There are many folks who have come forward to sign up to help and we hope others will offer too.

At some annual meetings, in addition to plant sales, art is available for sale. If we are to sponsor an art display and sale, we'll need volunteers to organize and "man" it during open hours. If you are interested in this aspect of the meeting and are willing to pitch in, please contact me.

Additionally, we are seriously considering having small troughs for table prizes at the Saturday night dinner/banquet. If we go with this idea, many little plants will be needed to plant them. Anticipating 200 - 250 attendees suggests about 20-25 troughs to plant. We're thinking sedums and ??? Interested in helping up with this? Again, please contact me for more info. Thanks.

Lastly, Ev Whittemore of Penrose N.C. and NARGS person, is expanding the slide programs available to chapters who need programs and aren't as lucky as we with plant talent. She has requested help from us. She seeks people who have or can provide slides and a script, varying from a 20 minute presentation to an hour, on topics of interest to rock gardeners. She mentioned interest in, but not limited to rock garden plants, construction, and garden travels. NARGS has a fund to reimburse you for the cost of copying the slides. If you're interested in knowing more, call Ev at 828-884-5479 or write to P.O. Box 74, Penrose, NC 28766-0074. Sorry she has no email address.

We have two outstanding upcoming speaker: Dick Lighty and Fred Case. You do not want to miss them.

Mailed March 1, 2002

First Class Mail

Bobby J. Ward
Editor, *The Trillium Newsletter*
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USA

