

The

REYNOLDA GARDENS
of Wake Forest University

Fall
2012

Gardener's

JOURNAL

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The Importance of Water

by Amanda Lanier, RGWFU curator of education

It was about this time of year roughly a hundred years ago, when the Reynolds' set out to find a water source for the operation of his large country estate. Water would be needed for several reasons including drinking. It was quite an amazing discovery that he was able to find artesian water on the property, which would be essential in providing a healthy environment for his family and the Reynolda community. What is even more remarkable is that the stream fed by this natural spring and the pond it fills contains some of the cleanest water in North Carolina.

In 2001 Dr. Robert Browne, professor of biology at Wake Forest University, documented the stream flowing from the artesian spring as "well buffered", in contrast to "most of the Piedmont North Carolina streams, which are poorly buffered and usually have a pH in the acidic range." Dr. Browne had worked with students for several years researching this unique aquatic habitat. Through his findings, he also noted that it was rare to see some of the organisms that were documented in the stream in the Piedmont of North Carolina. The Reynolda/Silas Creek Floodplain that serves as the buffer to the stream has been preserved as an undeveloped meadow, which has provided natural protection to all the living things that reside there.



The Young Naturalists that visit in the summer could also tell you about the health of the stream. This week long day camp provides elementary aged students the opportunity to explore the natural world through experiences in Reynolda's gardens, greenhouses, woodlands, fields, and streams. The highlight of the week for participants in the program is the "stream walk." This hour-long excursion allows time for investigation and discovery of the living organisms that reside there. What is most often found during the activity are some of the more sensitive bioindicator species, such as salamanders, crayfish, dragonfly and mayfly nymphs, and larvae. Bioindicators are used as a measure of the condition or health of an ecosystem. Salamanders are one of the most exciting finds for the children, and many are found during these excursions, indicating that this "canary in the coal mine" species is thriving in this habitat.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

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Air Plants

by David Bare, RGWFU greenhouse manager

You have seen them at beach side souvenir shops growing out of seashells and at convenience stores attached to refrigerator magnets. Air plants, or *Tillandsias*, may be the floral equivalent of Tupperware, able to withstand deserts, rainforest, high and low elevation and, worst of all, the suburban household. They take the durability of cactus one step further; they don't even need a pot.

It all comes down to a little adaptation called a trichome. These scale like structures form overlapping layers like the shingles of a roof on the leaves of *Tillandsia*. To the naked eye, they look like a mantle of fuzz, but if you look under high magnification you can see these tiny scales. They enable the leaves to absorb moisture and provide a spot for nitrogen fixing bacteria to thrive. They give *Tillandsia* the amazing ability to thrive on what appears to be practically nothing. With this adaptation they are able to grow on a multitude of strata, as our friends at the convenience store have demonstrated.

The diversity and beauty of the genus is poorly represented at the 7-Eleven however. Estimates count anywhere from three hundred to five hundred species in the genus *Tillandsia*, making it the largest in the bromeliad family. It is also the most widely dispersed.

There are *Tillandsias* that grow on cactus in Peru and Mexico, on rocks in Bolivia and Ecuador, and on trees throughout the neotropics. Perhaps the best known of these is Spanish moss, *Tillandsia usneoides*. Spanish moss finds its northern limit in coastal Virginia and spreads all the way to Argentina.

Tillandsia are usually sold bare root or mounted on wood or some other substrate.

A few species are grown in pots of well-drained medium. It is not uncommon to find that the roots are minimal or even non-existent. They are not necessary for the uptake of water or nourishment, their sole purpose is to help the plant grab on to a surface. A bare root air plant can be attached to a slab of cork or a branch by tying it with fishing line or by simply applying a dab of Liquid Nails.

Tillandsias are tough characters but to thrive and bloom in cultivation, they need regular care. Water is the essential need. They can either be misted several times a week or dropped in a basin of water for an hour or two once a week. They can also be soaked overnight every three weeks, but I would be a little cautious of this method. A mounted plant wants more water and humidity, around fifty to seventy percent. The water should be pure—spring or rain water.

Position them in bright light. The harder and thicker the leaf, the more tolerant of sun they are. The majority of these plants want day temperatures from eighty to ninety degrees and sixties at night. Fertilize by diluting a typical house plant fertilizer one-fourth to one-eighth strength and applying through a mister.

Besides their novelty appeal, many *Tillandsia* have beautiful blossoms and several have leaves that blush a different color before blooming. Violet purple is the most common flower color, but the extraordinary blossoms of *Tillandsia funckiana* are a brilliant scarlet. Often sold as “Hawaiian volcano plant,” they are, in fact, from Venezuela. *Tillandsia duratii* has several triangular, violet flowers with a scent reminiscent of lilacs. This large growing, silvery plant has leaves that end in spirals and look much like a Dr. Seuss invention. It is an arid grower from Bolivia, Paraguay, and Argentina. *Tillandsia bulbosa's* swollen bases give it the appear-



Small Plants with a Big Presence

by Preston Stockton, RGWFU manager

It is interesting how your tastes change as you get older. I now love hot and spicy foods. In the past I owned large dogs, but now I seem to bring in ones that are smaller and smaller. I used to prefer pastels but now like pure primary colors. Although I still love plants that are big and bold, I am now attracted to small and dainty ones also. At home I try to find neat little things to place next to the walk or in pockets here and there.

One group of plants that is small in size and has a place in my garden, and here at Reynolda, are the creeping sedums. Most of us have grown the taller, upright sedums, such as 'Autumn Joy' (*The Gardener's Journal*, Winter 2003). But today there are some very nice creeping varieties on the market that add interesting color and texture to the garden.

Sedums, also known as stonecrops, grow where many other plants will not. They love thin soils and mostly full sun. As our summers have become drier and hotter, sedums have become happier. They love to bake. The only issue in our area can be the heavy clay soil. They must have sharp drainage, or they will rot. An ideal place for these plants is on slopes, in rock walls, between stepping stones, in borders, or in pots.

Creeping sedums make a very good groundcover, choking out weeds or growing in tough areas in which other plants struggle. Generally, they need full sun, but some varieties will tolerate or actually prefer partial shade. They come in an unending variety of foliage colors, including green, yellow, gray, chartreuse, and purple, and many different textures. They bloom in the summer or fall, and the flowers cover the plant. Once established, sedums do not need any supplemental water. They are generally pest and disease free.



Here are several varieties that I like, and I think would have a place in any garden:

***Sedum makinoi* 'Ogon'** — This is such a great plant. It has very small, bright yellow, rounded leaves and yellow flowers. It stays very flat on the ground. This is one variety that has to have some shade and a tad more moisture but good drainage. I grow it at home in almost full shade. Its native habitat is southern Japan in areas where it is moist and shady. It has been hardy for us the last several years, but we have had it die out in cold winters. I have also grown *S. makinoi* 'Limelight.' It is much the same but more of a lemon-lime color.

***Sedum rupestre* 'Angelina'** — This sedum has gold, needle-like, evergreen foliage. It becomes a copper color in the winter. It grows about four inches tall, up to six to eight inches when in bloom. The flowers are yellow. Another cultivar, *S. rupestre* 'Blue Spruce', has blue-green foliage. Both are fast growers and can spread eighteen inches in two growing seasons.

***Sedum spurium* 'John Creech'** — I have grown this beautiful sedum in a pot at home for several years with no fertilizer or water, and it continues to thrive. It is a ground hugger with small, scalloped leaves and pink flowers in late summer. It is named after the late Dr. John Creech, former Director of the United States National Arboretum.

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From the Tropics to Reynolda

by **Forrest Allred**, *RGWFU head horticulturist*

What brings someone to, or in my case, back to Reynolda Gardens? A few of the answers to this question might include love of plants, history, nostalgia, nature, the great outdoors, fragrance, a knowledgeable staff, and romance. All of these things have brought me back here, but fragrance further enticed me to return. You see my love of horticulture has its roots in fragrance. I first fell in love with the fragrance of Plumeria and have been pursuing my love of plants ever since.

Having moved from Saipan to North America, I have to admit there are many days I miss the tropics and the fragrances of Plumeria, Gardenia, Mimosa, and Ylang Ylang (EE-lang-EE-lang) even after 23 years. You would not find a Plumeria in the Reynolda conservatory let alone outdoors in the Piedmont. So what does an islander have to do to find fragrance at Reynolda? Here is a list of a few I have found to fulfill that desire.

Paeonia lactiflora 'Festiva Maxima' - Chinese Peony, Garden Peony

Peonies are a must in early to late spring that will enhance any garden experience. Not all Peonies are fragrant, but 'Festiva Maxima' has an exhilarating fragrance used in the garden or as cut flowers. It has large, double, white blooms speckled with crimson flecks. Peonies require four to five hours of full sun daily. Use them in beds as a single specimen, in mass plantings, or in a perennial border.

Lobularia maritima 'Carpet of Snow' - Sweet Alyssum

Sweet Alyssum is an annual with numerous white flowers and a fragrance resembling sweet honey. It is a tidy, compact, plant growing four inches tall and ten to fifteen inches wide. Use them primarily in borders, rock gardens, window boxes, and baskets.

Plant it in full sun to partial shade. They do well in spring, early summer, and fall.

Philadelphus xlemoinei 'Avalanche' - Sweet Mockorange

Mockoranges typically have fragrant, one inch diameter, white flowers. 'Avalanche' is one of the most fragrant, but here at Reynolda something is missing. They do not have a strong fragrance. Typically, they bloom late spring to early summer. They will grow four feet with arching branches in full sun to part shade. Use as a foundation planting, shrub border, hedge, or specimen.

Viburnum carlesii - Koreanspice Viburnum

This viburnum has three-inch snowball-like clusters of waxy flowers, budding pink to red, opening to white. They generally bloom March through April. The flowers, quite similar to Daphne odora, are quite intoxicating for ten to fifteen days then, as the leaves emerge they gradually disappear. This viburnum grows up to eight feet tall and six feet wide. Plant them in full sun to partial shade.

Buddleja davidii - Butterfly-bush, Summer Lilac, Buddleia

Butterfly-bushes simply smell sweet. Their flowers are born on trusses-a flower cluster born on the end of a stem, branch or stalk-that can be eight to twelve inches long and two to three inches wide. They grow six to fifteen feet tall and five to ten feet wide. Use them as a border plant, specimen in a perennial garden, or in a mixed hedge. They perform well in full sun and will bloom all summer.

Daphne odora - Winter Daphne

Whether you would describe Winter Daphne flowers as having a jasmine-like scent, lemony fragrance similar to magnolia, or tropical; they are to die for. When winter would appear to never end, daphne heralds spring is on the way, blooming from February to April. The rosy purple buds open rose pink and can deliver a fragrance dozens of feet way. They grow three to four feet tall and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

The Importance of Water

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The importance of our water sources is heavy on the minds of many these days. We are living in a world where “every day, 2 million tons of sewage and industrial and agricultural waste are discharged into the world’s water” according to the World Water Assessment Program. Clean water remains one of the most controversial environmental concerns of our time. The United Nations Human Development Report states that “every twenty seconds a child dies from a water related disease” and that “more children die from water related illnesses than AIDS, malaria and measles combined.” Locally, we have bodies of water where fish are so contaminated with mercury that residents are encouraged to avoid them. There are also issues such as hydraulic fracturing that could affect the quality of our groundwater supply. Given all of these factors, natural springs like the one here at Reynolda could be in danger of becoming polluted.

At the Gardens one of our greatest missions is to educate the public, and, oftentimes, this includes a look at our natural environment and the issues associated with it. For many our global environmental outlook is quite depressing, but it is important to highlight the good that is occurring. One of the most important lessons in environmental education is to provide practical options that people can use to make a situation better. Without concrete ideas that can be implemented, people begin to feel hopeless. We are exceptionally fortunate here at Reynolda to have such a shining example of good environmental stewardship. The fact that this land was conserved and treated with great respect gives us the opportunity to show others how healthy environments can remain healthy. It would be safe to say that no one would have known one hundred years ago that

Reynolda would be such a haven for so many living things amidst the urban pressures of today. However, we must assume that Mrs. Reynolds would be appreciative of Reynolda’s profound stewardship and its opportunity to bring the hope of a healthy environment to all who visit here. 🌱

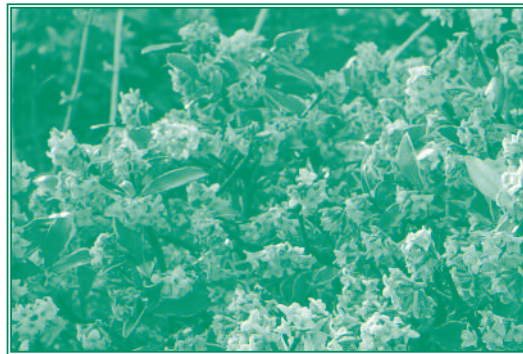
From the Tropics to Reynolda

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

wide. Plant them as a specimen or group close to a building or home where you can enjoy their fragrance. *Note: Look for this plant behind the former dairy barn in the Village.*

Clerodendron trichotomum - Harlequin Glorybower

Harlequin Glorybower has terminal panicles of fragrant white flowers with pink calyxes. They bloom in the late summer, smelling similar to Rubrum Lily, and attract butterflies. After flowering, deep blue berries develop surrounded by rose calyxes. Growing generally between six to fifteen feet tall, they can be used as a shrub, multi-trunked tree, or specimen tree. 🌱



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In honor of the Reynolda Gardens
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Neal
In memory of Jane Goodson
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Restricted Gifts

Dogwood Trees
by Forest Garden Club
Seed for meadow
by Little Greens Garden Club
Young Naturalist Scholarships
by JoAnn and Bryan Yates

Summer 2012 Favorites

by **Michelle Hawks**, *RGWFU horticulturalist*

Growing up in Fancy Gap, Virginia, was boring, or so I thought at the time. I had all these chores to do: feed the cattle, gather the eggs, sweep the tool shed, and my least favorite, weed the vegetable gardens. Little did I know that all of this was preparing me to appreciate the hard work that comes with growing my favorite vegetables. Mom would tell me to go pick beans and instead I would head straight for the cucumbers and pick them first. Some people can't live without their phone, but I can't live without cucumbers.

One enjoyable thing about growing up on a farm is all the different vegetables you can grow. The same thing is true here at Reynolda Gardens. Here are a few new plants we grew this year and really liked.

Salt and Pepper Cucumber, *Cucumis sativus* 'Salt and Pepper'

The name and the appearance of this cucumber sparked many questions from the public. Is that a white cucumber? Yes, the salt and pepper cucumber is a white-skinned pickling cucumber. Are you sure it doesn't have some disease? Yes. Although it does look different, this type of cucumber actually has powdery mildew resistance. Do they taste like salt and pepper? No, but they did have a wonderful robust cucumber taste. Despite all the questions, it's a wonderful selection that grows three to five inches, is plentiful, and easy to see in the vines.

Flavorburst Pepper, *Capsicum annuum* 'Flavorburst'

This name says it all. If you love peppers as much as I do, then this is the pepper for you. This is by the far the sweetest pepper I have ever put in my mouth. This juicy thick-walled bell is an uncommon lime green to gold color with a refreshingly sweet, almost citrus-like flavor. It is also delightful in salads or for fresh eating and

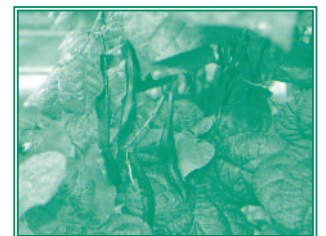
the color really stands out! This pepper is wonderful for cooking and is a very heavy producer. Flavorburst is sure to be in the garden in the future.

Moulin Rouge Sunflower, *Helianthus annuus* 'Moulin Rouge'

The sunflower is my absolute favorite plant. It is the happiest of all flowers with its different sizes, shapes, and colors. Moulin Rouge will steal the show in your gardens. It has a rich velvety, deep red, flower that will grow four to six inches wide. This sunflower will continue to grow from summer into fall, and will reach about sixty to eighty inches in height. Moulin Rouge is also a great cut flower. I cannot say enough about how sunflowers add to your gardens and to your soul.

Purple Podded Pole Beans, *Phaseolus vulgaris* 'Purple Podded'

I am always looking for unique vegetables to plant in the garden. We have grown purple beans in the past but not this type. This heirloom plant is favored by many gardeners not only because of its excellent taste but also for the deep purple pods that are in direct contrast with its foliage, making it a stunning plant in the garden. I planted purple podded pole beans and didn't get as much of a harvest as I anticipated. However, I was able to pick enough to know that these beans are not only beautiful on the vine, but make you smile from the sweetness of the taste.



Caraflex Cabbage, *Brassica oleracea* 'Caraflex'

The sweetest, most tender cabbage that I can recall us planting is Caraflex cabbage. Its cone shape looks striking in the garden. Caraflex is not only perfect for coleslaw and stir-fry but also for salads, where you want some extra crunch. This hybrid produces compact plants, allowing for dense planting.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

The Cedar Walk at Reynolda

by John Kiger, RGWFU assistant manager

At the completion of the formal gardens in the early 1920s, one can envision an ecstatic Katharine Reynolds as she unveiled the gardens to the expectant guests at the conservatory doors. The picture I have in my mind is much like the scene in *Titanic* where the ship's crew opens the double doors for the awaiting passengers to reveal the beauty that lies within. Today visitors still enter the gardens through the conservatory doors.

As visitors meander through the rose gardens and the theme gardens, they find themselves at the Lions Head Fountain, which is the focal point of this area of the garden. Directly behind the fountain, the garden is divided by five Tea Houses. As they proceed south, they enter the "Nicer Fruit and Vegetable Garden." At the far end is a shelter that offers visitors a shady place to relax. From this point, the vista leads to a quaint little bench with a log cabin directly behind it. This area is known as the Cedar Walk.

Thomas Sears, the Philadelphian landscape architect who designed Reynolda, designed the Cedar Walk to be approximately eighteen feet in width with a ten-foot wide path directly up the center. There were four-foot beds on each side planted with rows of Eastern Red Cedars, *Juniperus virginiana*. Sears did not specify a quantity. This evergreen tree is, in fact, a juniper. It is native to the eastern United States and generally reaches a height of twenty-five to forty feet. Due to its aromatic qualities, wood from the tree is used in cedar chests, paneling, and, most commonly, fence posts. It is believed that the cedars plants on the Cedar Walk were moved from other areas of the estate.

In front of the cedars, Sears specified the planting of many different types of bulbs, including five varieties of Narcissus, fourteen varieties of Tulips, and two varieties of Lilies. Black and white photographs found in scrapbooks from 1920 to 1922 show the cedar walk was a beautifully landscaped area.

Mr. Sears returned in the early 1930s to redesign many areas of the Reynolda landscape, with the intention of lowering maintenance demands. On the Cedar Walk plan, he wrote, "remove cedars and replace with *Ligustrum lucidum*. The reason behind this decision remains a mystery today.

The Jaeger Company completed a Cultural Landscape report of the Reynolda Estate in 2010. In this report, there are recommendations on preserving the landscape. The Cedar Walk is mentioned in the report, and they contend that the ligustrum planted here are *L. japonicum*, not *L. lucidum*. Both species are extremely similar. The major difference is in the height. *L. japonicum* can reach a height of fifteen to eighteen feet, while *L. lucidum* can reach a height of forty to fifty feet.

The Cedar Walk has been long overdue for renovation. Through the years, invasive vines such as English Ivy, Wisteria, and Porcelain vine, found their way into the border and began choking out the ligustrum. The plants were also overgrown and becoming very sparse. In August of 2012, the Reynolda Gardens staff began a renovation of this area by reducing the height of each plant to approximately six feet and removing the invading vines. There is no need to worry if this seems drastic, Ligustrum can take a heavy pruning and recover quite rapidly. Our goal is to restore the beauty of the area to reflect Mr. Sears' vision. You will be quite amazed what can be accomplished by pruning, weeding, mulching, and planting some grass seed.

The next time you visit, ask me about the Cedar Walk. If you are not familiar with this area, I will be more than happy to show you around. Just remember, it may still be a work in progress.

Bulb plant list for Cedar Walk:

Narcissus:

Primrose Daffodil, White Bunch Daffodil, Pale Yellow Daffodil, Trumpet Daffodil, The Lent Lily, and White Daffodil.

Lilies:

Golden Banded and Golden Turks Cap.

Tulips:

Salmon Pink, Yellow Cottage, Flesh Color Buff Tinged, Rosy Pink, Lilac Purplish Rose Tinged, Soft Rosy Darwin, Slaty Blue, Purple Violet, Soft Lilac Heliotrope, Cerise Scarlet Darwin, Soft Heliotrope Lilac Darwin, Slaty Purple Darwin, Dark Mauve Heliotrope Violet, and White Darwin. 🌷

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Air Plants

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

ance of a vegetable octopus. It too has red flowers.

Tillandsia tectorum is a woolly plant of dry canyons in Peru and Ecuador. The fuzzy leaves are adapted to rake moisture from the infrequent fogs and dews in its native habitat. Perhaps the most popular air plant in cultivation is *Tillandsia cyanea*. The large fan shaped bract bears violet blue, triangular flowers that are large for the genus and certainly showy. This accounts for some of its popularity, but the fact that this one actually does better in a pot of well-drained mix may make it a little easier for the average grower to accommodate. 🌱

Small Plants with a Big Presence

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Sedum *hyb.* 'Fine Goldleaf Stonecrop' — This is a lovely sedum that is being marketed by Proven Winners®. It seems they could have come up with a better name for such a great plant. I found this plant at a garden shop near Charleston, SC, and fell in love with it immediately. It has very tight, small, golden leaves and grows flat on the ground. You want to pet it when you walk by! We have grown it in full sun here at Reynolda, but I have it in partial shade at home. It is brighter yellow in the sun. We were a little worried that it may not be hardy here, but it lived through last winter. It may be better to grow in a pot and bring in on really cold winter days. 🌱

Summer 2012 Favorites

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Sarah's Choice Cantaloupe, *Cucumis melo* 'Sarah's Choice'

Working with John in the vegetable garden can be an adventure. Sometimes you will see us walking around eating onions and laughing a lot. One day he said to me, "these cucumbers are really good." I replied, "Cucumbers? Those are not cucumbers those are cantaloupes!" John had picked a very small green cantaloupe he had believed to be a cucumber. This cantaloupe was a heavy producer and very tasty. Its vines bear three pound oval fruit with thick, orange flesh. When we plant these again I will have to keep my eye on John to make sure he doesn't mistake them again for cucumbers. 🌱



REYNOLDA GARDENS

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