



# Magnolia

*Magnolia grandiflora*  
The Laurel Tree of Carolina  
Catesby's *Natural History*, 1743

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## “Here I Live Quietly Amid My Groves & Gardens”

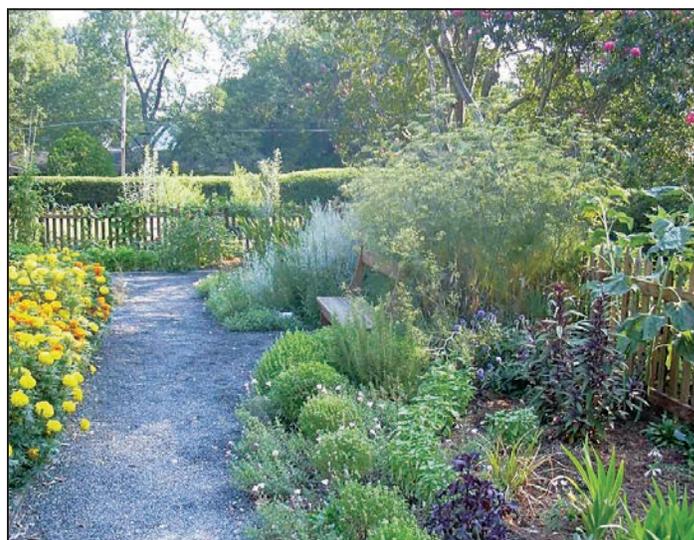
### ~ The Civil War Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston

By Jo Ann Williford, Raleigh, North Carolina

For many, gardening is not just a means of acquiring food but also a passion, a joy, and at times an escape from the realities of the troubles surrounding them. From three Civil War era women, we get a glance at how gardening fulfilled all of these roles.

This article is primarily a study of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 1823-1875, and her Civil War diary, 1860-1866. But a brief look at two other women with family ties provides an interesting view of the planter class in Civil War North Carolina, particularly as it relates to gardening.

Catherine Edmondston's brother John Devereux was married to a woman named Margaret Mordecai, 1824-1910. The Mordecais were a prominent Raleigh family. John and Margaret made their winter home at Runiroi Meadows Plantation in Bertie County, North Carolina; but through her family, Margaret inherited a plantation in Raleigh called Wills Forest, which was their summer home. Because John Devereux was appointed quartermaster general for North Carolina, the family spent most of the war years in Raleigh. Long after the war Margaret wrote a memoir for her grandchildren entitled *Plantation Sketches*, which was privately published in 1906. Margaret does not appear to be the gardener that her sister and her sister-in-law were. Perhaps her eight children had something to do with that. Reading *Plantation Sketches* will not give you much insight into historic gardens, but it will give you an excellent example of how long these women held a grudge. For instance, even though she was writing some 40 years after the war ended, Margaret described the arrival of the Yankees in Raleigh this way: "...we espied a long, blue line crawling serpent-like around a distant hill. Silently we watched, as it uncoiled itself, ever drawing nearer and still nearer, until the one great reptile developed into many reptiles



The restored garden of Ellen Mordecai located at Mordecai Historic Park in Raleigh, NC.

and took the form of men.” From Margaret, we learn something of serpent-like Yankees, but a discussion of gardening was limited to her descriptions of the slave dwellings. She wrote of the slave houses, “Each house had a front and back piazza, and a garden, which was

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Courtesy: City of Raleigh Parks, Rec., & Cultural Resources Dept.



# CALENDAR

Please visit the SGHS Web site, [www.southerngardenhistory.org](http://www.southerngardenhistory.org), for a complete and more detailed calendar with the latest updates and links to individual Web sites.

**January 13, 2014. Dean Norton, Director of Horticulture at George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate**, Charleston Horticultural Society Lecture Series, in Charleston, SC. Preservation of the restored eighteenth-century gardens and landscape of Washington's Mount Vernon will be discussed including the recently restored pleasure garden. Visit: [chashortsoc.org](http://chashortsoc.org)

**January 24-26, 2014. 28th Annual Southern Garden Symposium**, Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain, GA. Speakers include authors James Farmer; Ann McCormick, the Herb n' Cowgirl; Thomas Mickey; and Helen Yoest. Other lecturers include Hayes Jackson; Chris Strand; Lois Trigg Chaplin; and Norman Winter. Visit: [www.callawaygardens.com](http://www.callawaygardens.com); or contact: [education@callawaygardens.com](mailto:education@callawaygardens.com), (706) 663-5153.

**February 22, 2014. "The Inspired Gardener," Spring Perennial Symposium**, Atlanta Botanical Garden, co-sponsored by the Georgia Perennial Plant Association. Year-round gardening in the warm, humid, pest-disease-and drought-prone Southeastern climate is an endless and relentless challenge. Speakers addressing these issues include David Culp, Dottie Myers, Flo Chapin, Tim Martin, and Dr. Jean Williams-Woodward. Call (404) 876-5859 ext. 2558, or visit: [atlantabotanicalgarden.org](http://atlantabotanicalgarden.org)

**February 27, 2014. Garden Club of Georgia Historic Preservation Fundraiser**, Savannah, GA. The Oleander District will host a luncheon and lecture featuring Mount Vernon's Dean Norton, who will discuss the history and recent restoration projects of George Washington's Garden. Proceeds benefit the Historic Landscape and Garden Grant Fund of the GCG. Limited seating. Contact Lisa Hall, (912) 598-9504 or [hall7796@bellsouth.net](mailto:hall7796@bellsouth.net).

**February 28-March 2, 2014. "Preserving our Coastal Garden History," 32nd Annual Meeting of the Southern Garden History Society in Savannah, GA.** Features gardens and homes in the Historic Savannah District and the Isle of Hope along the Intercoastal Waterway. Tours include Lebanon Plantation (1804); Wormsloe Plantation; the Cope/Jaakkola House; and Judge Solomon's camellia gardens and home, Wellesly Manor. Contact Lucy Hitch, [lucy.hitch@comcast.net](mailto:lucy.hitch@comcast.net). Visit: [southerngardenhistory.org](http://southerngardenhistory.org)

**March 4, 2014. "Celebrating 30 Years: It's All About the Plants," 30th Davidson Horticultural Symposium**, Davidson, NC. Features the joy and inspiration felt from observing the subtleties of form, color, touch, fragrance, and history of the plants. Speakers: Kirk Brown, David Culp, Holly Shimizu, Paula Gross, and Tony Avent. Visit: [davidsonsymposium.org](http://davidsonsymposium.org)

**March 19, 2013. Ashley Wright McIntyre Lecture**, Cherokee Garden Library at the Atlanta History Center. Opening event for "Following in the Bartrams' Footsteps: Contemporary Botanical Artists Explore the Bartrams' Legacy," **Exhibition, March 19 – June 17, 2014.** Joel Fry, Curator of Bartram's Garden, will present a survey of William Bartram's illustrations and examine the scope and influences of his career as a seminal American natural history illustrator; followed by a reception and tour of the exhibition. Reservations: (404) 814-4150; online: [AtlantaHistoryCenter.com/Bartram](http://AtlantaHistoryCenter.com/Bartram).

**April 5-7, 2014. 68th Colonial Williamsburg Garden Symposium**, Williamsburg, VA. Guest speakers and Colonial Williamsburg staff will share their expertise on the concept, design, maintenance, and pleasures of organic gardening and living lightly – from the ground up. Includes brewing beer, fragrance, garden-to-table meals, herbs, heritage breeds, natural dyes, and more. Co-sponsored by the American Horticultural Society and *Organic Gardening*. Visit: [history.org](http://history.org)

**April 11-12, 2014. Plantasia**, Charleston, SC. *Charleston Horticultural Society's Premier Plant Sale!* For more information on PLANTASIA, contact the Charleston Horticultural Society at (843) 579-9922, or visit: [chashortsoc.org](http://chashortsoc.org).

**April 26 – May 3, 2014. Historic Garden Week in Virginia; "America's Largest Open House."** This 8-day statewide event provides a unique opportunity to see unforgettable gardens at the peak of Virginia's springtime color and beautiful houses with over 2,000 flower arrangements by GCV members. Visit: [vargardenweek.org](http://vargardenweek.org)

**April 27, 2014. "William Bartram's Surprising Travels,"** Cherokee Garden Library at the Atlanta History Center. Kathryn Braund, Hollifield Professor of Southern History, Auburn University, is an expert in the 18th-19th century ethno-history of Creek and Seminole Indians. Lecture followed by a tour of Bartram's flora in the Mary Howard Gilbert Memorial Quarry Garden by Sarah Roberts, AHC Dir. of Historic Gardens and Living Collections and a light reception. Reservations: (404) 814-4150; or online: [AtlantaHistoryCenter.com/Bartram](http://AtlantaHistoryCenter.com/Bartram).

**May 21-24, 2014. "Exploring the Building Blocks of Livable Cities," the Annual Meeting of the Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation**, Saint Paul, MN. The Land of 10,000 Lakes offers innovative strategies for building strong cities from architect and urban designer Ken Greenberg. Visit: Indian Mounds Park, Summit Avenue (the longest and best-preserved row of Victorian mansions in America), and Mickey's Diner (the first of its type listed on the National Register). Visit: [ahlp.org](http://ahlp.org)

**May 24 & 31, 2014. Garden Conservancy Open Days**, in Charleston, SC. In 2013 the Charleston Horticultural Society teamed up with the Garden Conservancy and Spoleto Festival USA to offer the first ever Charleston Open Days garden tour. This year's event will expand to two days; each day offers 8-10 different gardens including several in the Old Village of Mt. Pleasant. Self-guided. Visit: <http://spoletousa.org> or [gardenconservancy.org](http://gardenconservancy.org)

**March 27, 2014. Eudora Welty Garden 10th Anniversary Celebration**, at the Mississippi Museum of Art in downtown Jackson, MS. The gathering includes a luncheon and lecture by author Julia Reed. Heirloom plants will be sold on site and at the House and Garden on March 29. The Welty House, a National Historic Landmark, is a museum of the MS Dept. of Archives and History and is supported by the Eudora Welty Foundation. Proceeds benefit the Welty Garden's continuing restoration. Tickets: [foundation@eudorawelty.org](mailto:foundation@eudorawelty.org). Visit: [eudorawelty.org](http://eudorawelty.org).

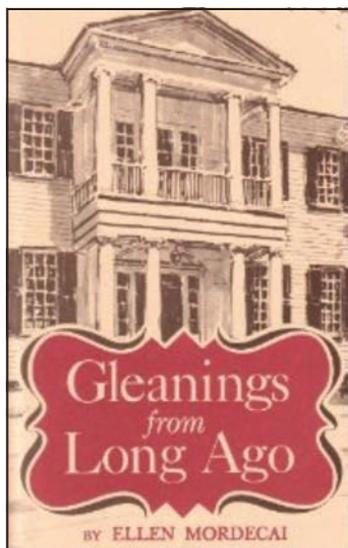
**November 2014. Southern Garden Heritage Conference: Gardening with Heirloom Fruits & Vegetables**, held at The State Botanical Garden of Georgia, Athens, GA. More information to follow. Contact Cora Keber, [ckeber@uga.edu](mailto:ckeber@uga.edu) or (706)542-6156.

## "Here I Live Quietly.....(continued from page 1)

cultivated or allowed to run wild according to the thrift of the residents. It generally was stocked with peach and apple trees, and presented a pretty picture in spring, when the blue smoke from the houses curled up to the sky amid the pink blossoms..." She goes on to say, "Beside the sale crops of cotton and corn, sweet potatoes were raised in large quantities for the negroes, to which they were allowed to help themselves without stint, also a summer patch of coarse vegetables such as they liked."

But Margaret's older sister, Ellen Mordecai Mordecai (she married a cousin), wrote a great deal about gardens and gardening. Ellen also wrote a memoir in her old age entitled *Gleanings from Long Ago*. From Ellen Mordecai, 1820-1916, we get detailed descriptions of gardens. She wrote of her memories of the home place, Mordecai Plantation, which is today a city-owned historic site in Raleigh. The garden at Mordecai, named for Ellen, is based on her description of the garden in her book.

"A favorite place for us to play was the garden. It was a big old-fashioned garden, with walks running at right angles laying off the beds. There were borders for flowers, separated by planks from the vegetable part, and on these borders grew old-fashioned flowers."



Ellen Mordecai's memoir, 1974 reprint of 1933 edition.



Hascosea Plantation, a gift from Thomas Devereux to his daughter Catherine Devereux Edmondston and her husband Patrick.

From Ellen we learn that things grown in the garden often had uses other than mere sustenance. She wrote,

"Then there were all the herbs....It was customary in old English times to put a sprig of [rosemary] in the hands of the dead as a symbol of the resurrection, and when Brother Jac died, years after, we put a sprig of rosemary in his hand."

Ellen describes quince trees and a row of early peaches. There were also currants that grew along the garden fence, and she wrote, "...we used to gather the beautiful red bunches. They bore freely. Currant jelly was always made from them and occasionally currant wine."

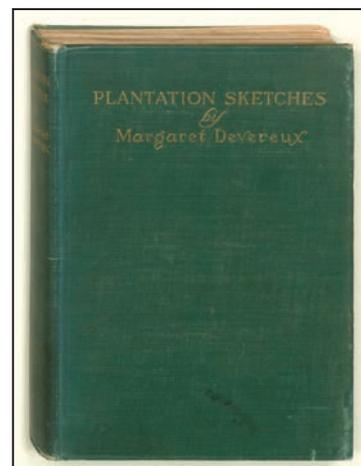
Plums, strawberries, and blackberries grew wild and the Mordecai's often took excursions to collect them. Of the strawberry hunts she wrote, "Whoever would find a big bunch would call out, 'A Kingdom! A Kingdom!' and we would fill our little baskets." They also cultivated plums, as she spoke of the plum nursery.

The Mordecai parents died young, and the children were raised by their aunts. Ellen wrote of a number of different homes she remembered and at each one she described a garden. At Aunt Seawell's house, "Behind the house was a large garden, which was terraced, and in the high part of the garden grew the best peaches I had ever tasted—at least I thought so then." At her grandparents' house in Richmond she recalls,

"The garden...was a large one.... Old Uncle Phil was the gardener,...he would always give us a little piece of ground for our garden and would give us pepper grass and such as that to sow....In the bottom of the garden was a beautiful cherry tree...and the cherries hung so low that we could gather and eat as many as we wanted...."

She also noted, "There were several large apple trees in this garden...and we would get the apples and according to the custom of the time, we would bury them in the ground to ripen, with what success I do not know."

At her Aunt Brickle's she observed: "Passing the hedge, you entered her vegetable garden...which supplied her with plenty of good vegetables; and lavender and all the



Margaret Mordecai Devereux' memoir, written for her grandchildren. Privately published in 1906.

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## "Here I Live Quietly.....(continued from page 3)

old-fashioned herbs abounded in it and a scuppernong grape vine was on one side of it. It was a picture of neatness and thrift."

She recalls that at her brother Jac's house there were always fresh peaches available and watermelons and muskmelons were cut at all times of the day. In good fruit years, Jac "would distill his good supply of apple and peach brandy and made his own vinegar." Ellen noted, "There were no revenue officers then prowling about to interfere with a man's possessions."

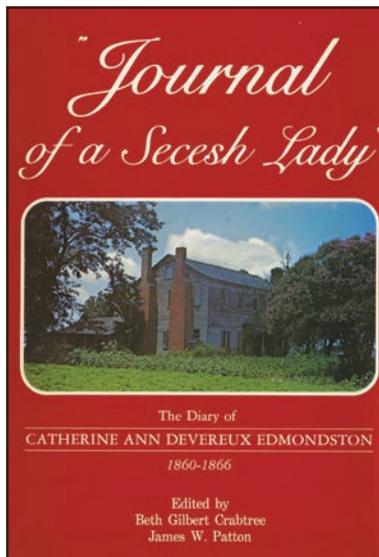
She devoted an entire section to two of the aunts who raised her, and of one she noted, "Aunt Tempe was a great preserver and always had an abundance of all kinds of preserves, pickles, jams, citron and brandied peaches." And so, from Ellen Mordecai we learn not only how gardens looked but how some of the produce was used.

It is interesting to see what these elderly women remembered of life in the Old South. But in Catherine Edmondston we have not memories but observations. Her diary spans all the years of the war.

In July 1860, in writing about her sister-in-law Margaret, Catherine observed, "How pretty she is! What a gift beauty is! Perhaps I prize it too much as it has been denied me."

A photograph of Catherine reveals that she was not being falsely modest. Beauty was not her gift. However, she went on to say, "... neither has its absence been made up by corresponding gifts."

There one must disagree with her, because it is very clear in reading her diary that she was a very gifted gardener. For Catherine, gardening was not just a



Catherine Edmondston's diary was published over 100 years after it was written, in 1979.



Catherine Anne Devereux Edmondston, 1855-1865.

Courtesy of the NC Historical Archives

means of getting food; it was a source of joy and comfort. She wrote, "My garden is beautiful. How I love it!"

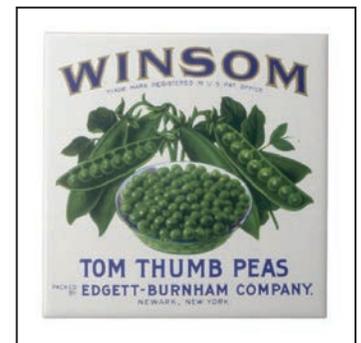
From Catherine's father, Thomas Pollock Devereux, Catherine and her husband Patrick Edmondston received two plantations in Halifax County: Hascosea and Looking Glass. Catherine's journal began in 1860 when the country was not yet at war but when troubles were evident. For the next five years, amid her comments on politics, the military, her family, and her neighbors, she interspersed much information about her garden.

She not only gave an excellent catalogue of the vegetables and fruits that she included in her garden, but also she provided a sort of almanac with specific information on when she planted and when plants flowered. February and March of 1861 were consumed with planting, evidenced in the following sample entries:

- ✧ Feb. 13, 1861: *I planted some Fruit trees we brought from Aiken in the Fowl Yard....*
- ✧ Feb. 14, 1861: *Began to plant my Fruit trees from Augusta....*
- ✧ Feb. 16, 1861: *Planted Beets, Carrots, Spinach, Parsnips and Salsafy.*
- ✧ Feb. 18, 1861: *Finished planting fruit trees at Hascosea. Planted 2 doz. Albany Strawberry plats bought in Augusta at Looking Glass.*
- ✧ Feb. 21, 1861: *Planted three Apple trees we brought from Augusta.*
- ✧ March 1, 1861: *Planted at Looking Glass more Salsafy, Celery, Leeks, Vic Cabbage, Lettuce of Kinds, Radish for brother's children. In hot bed sowed Egg Plant & Tomatoes.*
- ✧ March 2, 1861: *Planted Tom Thumb & Aults Extra Early Peas, Sage, & Onion setts.*
- ✧ March 5, 1861: *Went to Hascosea. Straigtened Asparagus beds. Sowed Beets, Carrots, Salsafy, Onions, Leeks, & turnips. Mr. Edmondston & I set out 22 Dwarf Pears from Philadelphia & 4 Dwarf Apples. Brought 2 pears & 2 Apples to Looking Glass.*

It is interesting to note that she acquired trees in Augusta and Aiken.

According to a biography of the botanist Henry William Ravenel (1814-1887), these were centers for horticultural activity during this period. Also, her mention of Tom Thumb Peas is indicative of Patrick Edmondston's life-long interest in scientific farming, since



Tom Thumb peas.

this variety was fairly new, having been introduced in the 1850s. Gardening was often a joint effort for the couple. Catherine noted in July 1860: “He [Patrick] reads to me & gardens with me...I walk with him & enter into all his business as keenly as tho I were a farmer too.”

Even as the war was upon them, Kate records the details of her garden.

✧ *April 8, 1861:*

*Transplanted Cabbages sowed on the 28th of Jan. viz. E. Battersea, Ox heart, E. York. Planted Bush Squash & orange Melon*

✧ *April 9, 1861: Sowed 6 weeks beans....Intense anxiety about Sumter.*

Three days later, the firing on Fort Sumter, South Carolina, heralded the official beginning of the Civil War.

It is through these early diary entries that we are introduced to Catherine’s attention to the details of weather and the timing of flowers.

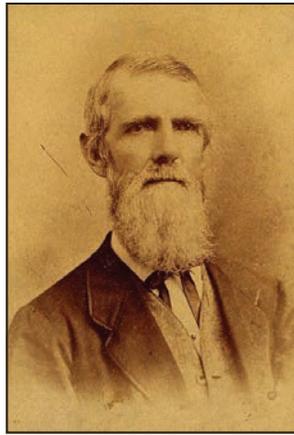
✧ *Feb 21, 1861: Peach trees beginning to bloom. From my record I see that in 1851 they first bloomed on Feb. 25th; in 52 on March 6th, in 56 on April 6th—56 was a most backward spring, for on the 1st of April I see ‘not a leaf has expanded not a green thing to be seen.’ In 1860, the Peach bloomed here about the 1st of March, as we saw them first between Society Hill & Florence on the 29th of Feb.*

On this day she also saw the first strawberry blossom.

✧ *June 1, 1862: As to the Garden, it is particularly backward. We have but few of the vegetables which it ought to give us at this season. As regards Peas, I excuse it, for during our continued absences this spring the pigeons & birds took them under their care & tho often replanted they never failed in their attentions! But for Beets, Lettuce, Snaps, Squashes, etc., Garden! I fear I must pronounce you ungrateful, for you had every appliance to enable you to perform your duty. Strawberries we have & have had in abundance for a month past. Our Quinces are for the first time in their lives loaded with fruit.*

✧ *Oct. 20, 1862: This afternoon gathered our winter Apples—not much of a labour, however, for the wet weather has played sad havock amongst them. They have rotted by the barrel full. What we have left I hope will keep.*

✧ *June 17, 1863: Moon changed & no prospect of rain. The drought is getting alarming. The corn does not grow.*



Henry William Ravenell

*The potatoes cannot be set out & the garden vegetables are burning up....*

✧ *Oct. 10, 1864: To our sorrow we woke up this morning to a “killing frost.” The potatoes, peas, & Dahlias bear dismal evidence of it severity; they look as tho’ they were scalded.*

She was often busy in the kitchen, making use of her produce. She does not provide recipes, however. For instance, she wrote on July 15, 1860:

✧ *Made Blackberry wine by a receipt given Mr. E. by Mrs. Haigh.*

Sarah Rutledge’s *Carolina Housewife or House and Home: by a Lady of Charleston*, published in 1847, included recipes that may have been familiar to Mrs. Edmondston and her contemporaries. Because Patrick Edmondston was from Charleston, South Carolina, chances were good that Catherine would have known of it. Of particular interest are recipes for salsify, which Catherine planted each year. Sometimes called oyster plant, *Carolina Housewife* provided directions for cooking it like imitation fried oysters.

Back to Mrs. Edmondston’s cooking:

✧ *July 16, 1860: Finished making Blackberry wine. Made in all 28½ gal exclusive of one\* Demijohn which ... burst.*

✧ *August 25, 1860: Making Brandy Peaches & Preserves.*

But as the war progressed, the jams and jellies that were a staple of these southern homes became mostly memories.

✧ *June 1, 1862: Our Quinces are for the first time in their lives loaded with fruit & as I walk past them, both themselves & the Strawberries seem to look at me saucily & defiantly, as tho they would say “Preserve me if you dare!” for they must know that I have not sugar to spare for such luxuries.*

Sugar and many other commodities brought exorbitant prices in war time. Citizens made substitutions as they could, but the shortages continued throughout the war.

✧ *May 1, 1863: [about Kate Miller’s wedding] Her Aunt Sophia entertained & gave them their wedding feast, nice bride’s cake she sent me, but the Raisin cake was really a clever substitute for the genuine article, being made of dried cherries and whortleberries. The eye was well deceived, but to the taste it was rather sour tho’ not more so than cake made from old raisins often is. “Confederate Raisins” are dried Peaches clipped to bits with scissors, & quite nice puddings do they make. Puddings! What a reminiscence! It seems ages since I*

*(continued on page 6)*

## "Here I Live Quietly.....(continued from page 5)

*dabbled in eggs & sugar, currants, macaroni, & sage. "What shall I have for dessert?" seems a question of medieval times; so long it is since the question perplexed me.*

Catherine took great interest in her apples and peaches. In fact almost as great a nemesis as the Yankees were the peach and apple borers that attack her fruit.

✧ *July 25, 1862: The vile insect the Apple tree borer eludes my sagacity. Knife in hand I probe, cut, & pare..... I am experimenting on the virtue of Sulphur & Lard upon Northern Spy & thus far with much success."*

✧ *Aug. 18, 1862: I have been since breakfast on my knees at the shrine of Pomona & it is now twelve o'clock. That is, I have been examining our young Peach Trees: & cutting the borer out, & a tiresome job it is. I have had all of them scalded with boiling water at the collar & then well rubbed with sulphur & Lard, a process which I hope will destroy the eggs....*

Apparently she found that her treatment was not working very well for she wrote:

✧ *Jan. 6, 1863: Perhaps by following him up with hot water every month in the year I may destroy him, but it is a ceaseless labour. The price of Peaches will be similar to that of Liberty at this rate, "Ceaseless vigilance."*

Her records provided the names of many of the varieties of apples and peaches grown in the Edmondston gardens. In this one entry she gave numerous apple varieties.

✧ *August 3, 1862: Our young orchard is bearing for the first time & as I wander through it the feeling with which I look upon the different trees is almost a personal one. I have a different feeling for each: Red Astrachan,*



Northern Spy Apples.

*Summer Rose, Summer Pearmain, there is a shade of sentiment towards each of you which varies in kind & as contrasted with those that are yet to be proved the difference is immense. Domine, Roman Stem, Mattamuskeet, etc., I look to you with hope, but rather with indifference as yet: but to Astrachan & Pearmain I mentally nod my head as to old friends—say "well done..."*

Mattamuskeet is thought to be a variety native to North Carolina. In other entries she also mentioned Woolman's Harvest and Northern Spy. Peach varieties also were listed.

✧ *April 1, 1863: We have had terrible weather latterly which has I fear played havoc with our Peach crop. "George the 4<sup>th</sup> is the only one that I have examined which gives promise of fruit. "Miss Timmons" is deceitful. "Old Mixon" a cheat & "President," "Ravenel's favorite," "Grape Mignon," "Newington," & "Early York"—blackhearted. Hard names to give my friends. The apples will I hope escape, as they are very backward."*

Ravenel's favorite was obviously a reference to Henry William Ravenel, who was both a cultivator and exporter of peaches from Aiken, South Carolina. In 1862 he estimated he had about four thousand peach trees and six to eight thousand bearing grape vines.

The grape and strawberry varieties that she mentions include Black Hamburg, concord, and scuppernong grapes and Albany and Princess Alice strawberries.

For these women, gardens were utilitarian, but they also provided places of refuge. For Ellen Mordecai it was the memories of the garden as a favorite playground that gave her joy. For Catherine the garden was a place of contemplation, which at times gave her peace of mind but at other times reminded her that she lived in great privilege even in the midst of strife. The war was ever evident in her writings, even as she used garden imagery to describe her feelings.

✧ *March 5, 1861: Patrick is dreadfully despondent and enough to take the heart out of one. Whilst we were planting Trees—I holding it & he throwing in the Earth—he suddenly stopped & said "where is the use? We may be doing this for the Yankees! Before this tree bears fruit the Yankees may have over run our whole country." On my remonstrating he continued, "Yes before a year has gone over our heads a rascally Yankee may pull this identical tree up." It cast a damper upon me & I said, "O Patrick, don't talk so; you distress me." "Well" he said as he resumed his spade, "I wont! But*

depend on it before this tree bears fruit—we shall be in the midst of the most desperate War the world ever saw!" Pray God he prove a false prophet.



Black Hamburg Grapes.

✧ April 8, 1861: and everything grown as tho there was no war to depress us. Who would not be a vegetable? No care. Ah! Yes but we would have periodical enemies of our own—snails, worms, Guerilla like Sparrows, & worse than all, "Cooks." War is to us an occasion evil, but "Cooks" are to them a perpetual foe!



Scuppernon Grapes.

✧ March 23, 1865: The weather has been unusually warm, some days we have even been without fire in our chamber & vegetation has advanced with giant strides. Would that Peace followed its example.

In her garden Catherine could find some measure of escape.

✧ Aug. 3, 1862: "By their fruits ye shall know them"! How vividly do these Bible similes taken from the world about us, the Vegetable and farming world, come home to the heart of one intimate with them & how strong is the impress which the "grand old gardener Adam has left on us all"!

✧ August 28, 1862: The house is too still. I will go & commune with my Pears & Peaches gather some Dahlias, & peep at the ripening Grapes.

But at other times the contrast of plenty and want were recorded in the diary as well.

✧ Dec. 31, 1862....How many are cast down from affluence to poverty, whilst as yet we are untouched by the hand of the spoiler. How many eat the bread of exile & dependence, whilst we dwell at home "under the shadow of our own Vine & our own Fig tree."

✧ Feb. 6, 1864: Busy with Garden seeds, dividing them with friends who are not so fortunate or so provident as I was last summer. I have a fine stock, as times go, but it seems meager to what I once thought a necessity for a good garden.

In 1862 Catherine described her life this way:

✧ July 30, 1862: God has mercifully protected me so far from it & I hear of it only through the papers or from the report of others, & here I live quietly amid my groves & gardens, wandering from tree to tree to see how the apples ripen, the peaches blush, peep at the Figs, bring in baskets of choice Dahlias....in short lead so delightful a "dolce par niente" life that I could almost forget there was a war.

Of course, she was not protected from it in the long run. The end of the war represented the end of a way of life for all of these women. The Mordecais managed to hold on to the home place, but it was Ellen's brother and his descendants who resided there. Margaret and John Devereux were eventually forced to sell all of their holdings to settle debts. The Edmondstons continued to live in Halifax County until their deaths in the 1870s, but also with greatly reduced means. None of these women likely ever envisioned the turn their lives would take; but neither did they realize that through their writings they left a treasure of historical information that continues to be mined today about the groves and gardens that played such a large part of those lives.

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- Jo Ann Williford is the retired supervisor of education for the North Carolina Office of Archives and History in Raleigh, North Carolina. This article is taken from her presentation at the 2013 Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes Conference at Old Salem, Inc. in Winston-Salem, NC, September 26-28.

# Book Review

***Apples of North America: 192 Exceptional Varieties for Gardeners, Growers, and Cooks***, by Tom Burford | Timber Press, 2013 | Hardcover, 300 pages | ISBN-10: 1604692499; ISBN-13: 978-1604692495 | list price 29.95

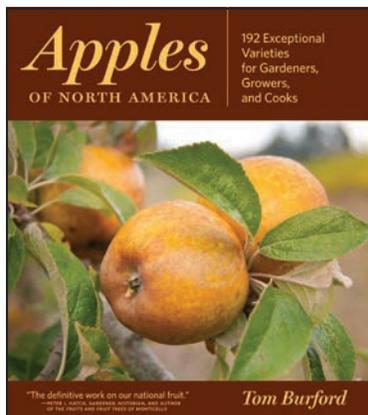
In the opening paragraph of *Apples of North America: 192 Exceptional Varieties for Gardeners, Growers, and Cooks*, Tom Burford relates a critical, now widely-appreciated fact about his early life. While the family apple orchard missed being his birthplace by minutes in 1935, as

labor pains encouraged his mother to return to her house and to bed to give birth, the apple orchard was his nursery, a place of delight, refuge, and learning that has nurtured his interest to the present, seventy-eight years later. He has resided at a sequence of addresses, however, the apple orchard was always home.

Writing warmly, intelligently, and, most importantly from experience, Tom Burford stands shoulder-to-shoulder with Creighton Lee Calhoun Jr. (b. 1934), the author of *Old Southern Apples* (1995) and *Old Southern Apples: A Comprehensive History and Description of Varieties for Collectors, Growers, and Fruit Enthusiasts* (2010), a revised, expanded edition of his earlier work, as an advocate for heirloom apples. Both men champion the pleasures of growing and consuming the old varieties that our ancestors ate as fresh or stewed fruit, apple butter, applesauce, apple jelly, in pies made from either fresh or dried apples, and, when pressed, enjoyed as cider. Then, there are the multiple uses of apple cider vinegar in the kitchen for pickling and in the dining room to enliven greens, salads, and other foodstuffs.

Members of the Southern Garden History Society who attended our 2013 annual meeting in May in Lynchburg, those who gathered for the Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes conference this past September, and those who already have read *Apples of North America* know the words Tom Burford uses to describe the sad twentieth-century fate of this once-favored fruit. They also know the words he uses in speech and in writing to evoke the pleasures of eating the many wonderful crisp, tart, sweet, flavorful varieties that have nearly passed into extinction.

This new book prompted me to look back into the



horticultural literature of the nineteenth century, a heyday of apple cultivation and pomological interest, and to two books in particular. In her addendum to U. P. Hedrick's *A History of Horticulture in America To 1860*, Elisabeth Woodburn writes that *The Fruits and*



Cheese apple.

*Fruit Trees of America*, written by Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852) and first published in 1845, "accounted for no less than 33 separate editions and printings by 1896." *The Fruit Culturist*, a second encyclopedia work written by John Jacob Thomas (1810-1895), was published in 1846 and renamed *The American Fruit Culturist* in 1849. U. P. Hedrick praised *The Fruits and Fruit Trees of America* as "a much better book" after acknowledging that "Probably no other horticultural work in America has been revised so often or published in such large editions" as *The American Fruit Culturist*. The twenty-first edition of *The American Fruit Culturist* was edited by William Henry S. Wood (1840-1907) and published in 1903. A copy of the 1908 printing is here on the shelves. Listings of varieties then in cultivation, with short descriptions of their characteristics, occupy fifty-three pages in the chapter on apples. Scanning those entries this reader appreciates all the more Tom Burford's lamentations that appear side-by-side with expressions of optimism in the pages of *Apples of North America*.

A short introduction and brief history of the apple, in which Mr. Burford cites Pliny the Elder's description of more than twenty named varieties in his *Natural History* and notes that 17,000 cultivars were listed in W. H. Ragan's *Nomenclature of the Apple: Catalogue of Known Varieties Referred to in American Publications from 1804-1904*, precedes the heart of this book, "Apple Varieties, A to Z." These comprise the "192 Exceptional Varieties for Gardeners, Growers, and Cooks" that appear in its title. The listing stops one letter short of "Z," with the York Apple as the final selection. The options are few but Zukoff's Winter, Zane, or Ziegler's Sweeting apples might have filled the bill if not extinct.

About one-quarter of the 192 featured apples originated in the South or have important associations with our region. Each of the 192 varieties has its own page. Color photographs of each are accompanied by Mr. Burford's short appreciations. The history, cultivation, and characteristics of each are briefly treated in nine categories, beginning most appropriately with Other Names and History, continuing with Exterior Description, Interior De-

Courtesy of T. Burford.

scription, and Tree Characteristics, and concluding with short assessments of Disease Resistance, Season of Ripening, Uses, and Storage Quality. My father's small orchard included Golden Delicious, Rome Beauty, Stayman, and Winesap apple trees and a variety of the Limbertwig, all promoted by Mr. Burford, as well as the now-despised Red Delicious trees. But the two oldest trees here are varieties that my father brought from his childhood farm. One he called the "Smith Apple," which I cannot locate among the 192 selections, and the other is the Cheese Apple, which appears on page 42. I have enjoyed eating Cheese Apples every year of my memory. The apples from our tree also made an excellent applesauce.

"The Orchard Primer," the second, smaller part of *Apples of North America*, comprises short chapters on orchard design and planning, planting and cultural management, propagation, and apple products that are useful and

reflect the experience of a lifetime. Mr. Burford's recall of apples being dried on the sheet tin roof of a chicken house is one of many anecdotes that reflect a common Southern experience, one that I, too, remember from childhood.

He concludes with listings of recommended uses of apple varieties, a short, selected bibliography, photography credits, his acknowledgments, the index, and conversion tables which are indeed helpful. One of his categories of use is "Ornamental Varieties," under which he lists six varieties. But readers of this book who linger over the beautiful photographs of each variety will have already concluded that each and every one would be a welcome ornament to our gardens and grounds.

Davyd Foard Hood  
Isinglass  
Vale, North Carolina

## Members in the News

The October/November 2013 issue of *Garden & Gun* magazine includes "Our Kind of Place: Mount Vernon," by Robert Hicks. **Dean Norton**, Mount Vernon's director of horticulture, received substantial attention in the article. The story can be accessed at: <http://gardenandgun.com/article/mount-vernon>. Norton also was featured in his Clemson University Alumni magazine, *Clemson World*, the summer/fall 2013 issue. The article, "Tigers on the Move: Working for George Washington," highlights Norton's 44-year career sustaining Washington's horticultural legacy at Mount Vernon.

The **Garden Club of Virginia's** *Historic Garden Week 2014* booklet features the **Anne Spencer Museum and Garden** on the front cover. Garden Week takes place April 26-May 3. Visit: [vagardenweek.org](http://vagardenweek.org)

Due to her exemplary leadership as Director of the **Cherokee Garden Library**, SGHS President **Staci Catron** was awarded the Peachtree Garden Club Medal at the Garden Club of Georgia's 2013 annual awards convention in Marietta. Established in 1929 to honor Mrs. Phinazy Calhoun, state president of the Garden Club of Georgia, the Peachtree Garden Club Medal is awarded to an individual within the Garden Club of Georgia for exceptional and outstanding accomplishment in the varied fields of gardening, and recognized as a definite and stimulating influence within the city and state. Catron joins the ranks of other SGHS members who have received the medal, including **Jane Campbell Symmes** and **Lee Dunn**.

*Historic Gardens Review*, October 2013-issue

number 29, includes an in-depth article by Bob Kelley, "Botanical Sleuths Keep Georgia Gardens on the Right Path," on the work of the Georgia Historic Landscape Initiative (GHLI), which was created in 2002 under the guidance of the late **Jim Cothran**, to provide a statewide inventory of Georgia's historic gardens. Kelley describes SGHS members **Staci Catron**, **Susan Hitchcock**, **Lee Dunn**, and **Mary Ann Eaddy** as "modern-day Miss Marples" who are exploring the state to document its living history by revisiting the 160 gardens described in the 1933 book *Garden History of Georgia*. The *Review* is the magazine of the Historic Gardens Foundation, based in Great Britain, which works to bring lovers of historic gardens together through its interactive worldwide network. Visit [historicgardens.org](http://historicgardens.org) for more about this organization.

"Professor Apple" **Tom Burford** is receiving accolades for his recently published book, *Apples of North America*, in newspapers and magazines across the country. *The Washington Post* garden editor, Adrian Higgins, featured "Virginia's Mr. Apple, Tom Burford," in his October 23 column; and "Apple of His Eye," by David A. Maurer, appeared in the December 11 issue of *The Roanoke Times*, just to name a few.



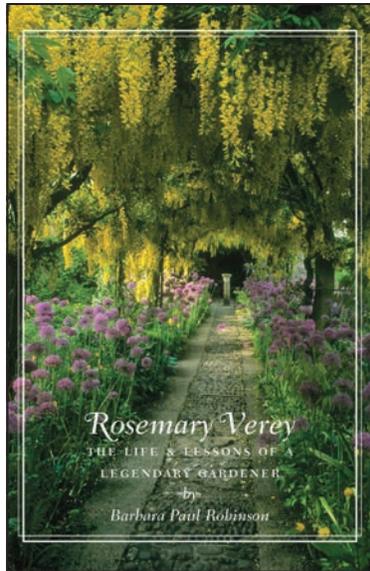
Tom Burford

Photo by P. Cornett

# In Print

**Rosemary Verey: *The Life and Lessons of a Legendary Gardener***, by Barbara Paul Robinson. David R. Godlin, publisher, 2012 | hardcover, 288 pages | ISBN 9781567924503 | list price \$29.99

Through interviews with Rosemary Verey's friends and gardening contemporaries, the American author, Barbara Robinson, gives a charming, readable, and clear-sighted account of the life of the person who, through her writing and lecturing, taught many Americans how to garden in the English style. Although Verey did not take to gardening until her 40s, she lived to earn the Order of the British Empire (OBE), the Victoria Medal of Honor (VMH) from the Royal Horticultural Society, and the enduring affection of countless gardeners on both sides of the Atlantic. Her very personal English-style gardens, on display at her home at Barnsley House, were what made her the essential adviser to the rich and famous, including Prince Charles and Elton John, and a beloved and wildly popular lecturer in America. A demanding and sometimes truculent taskmaster, and a relentless perfectionist, Rosemary Verey, in her life as in her work, was the very personification of the English garden style whose influence will be felt for generations.

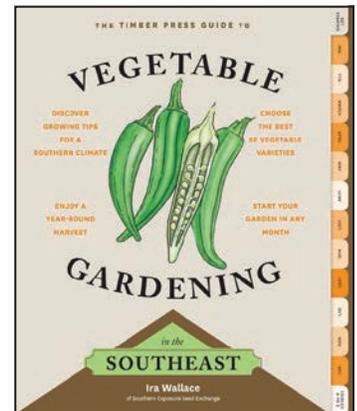


Rosemary Verey

***The Timber Press Guide to Vegetable Gardening in the Southeast***, by Ira Wallace. Timber Press, Inc., 2013 | paper, 256 pages | ISBN-10: 1604937111; ISBN-13: 9781604693713 | list price \$19.95

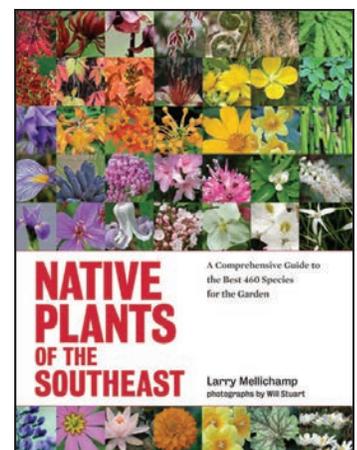
This latest publication by Timber Press is part of a series of vegetable gardening guides with regionally specific growing information: what to plant, when to plant it, and when to harvest based on climate, weather, and first frost. Local gardening expert Ira Wallace, founder of the well-known

and highly respected Southern Exposure Seed Exchange, brings her years of gardening expertise to this very readable and invaluable reference for our entire region: from Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, and Louisiana, to North and South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia, Tennessee, Maryland, and Arkansas. Organized as a monthly planning guide, this comprehensive gardening primer is an A to Z guide of edibles—a detailed, invaluable source for tried-and-tested varieties of the Southeast. Timber Press could not have selected a better author for this guide. Ira Wallace is a legend among followers of the organic gardening movement and champions of heirloom vegetable preservation. She is also co-organizer of the Heritage Harvest Festival at Monticello.



***Native Plants of the Southeast: A Comprehensive Guide to the Best 460 Species for the Garden***, by Larry Mellichamp with photos by Will Stuart. Timber Press, Inc., 2014 | hardcover, 384 pages, 542 color photos | ISBN-10: 1604693231; ISBN-13: 9781604693232 | list price \$39.95

*Native Plants of the Southeast*, by University of North Carolina-Charlotte professor Larry Mellichamp, shows you how to choose the best native plants to reflect the native beauty of our region and how to use them in the garden to attract beneficial wildlife and insects and make it more sustainable. This complete guide is an invaluable resource, with plant profiles for over 460 species of trees, shrubs, vines, ferns, grasses, and wildflowers. Each plant description includes information about cultivation and propagation, ranges, and hardiness. Comprehensive lists recommend particular plants for difficult situations, as well as plants for attracting butterflies, hummingbirds, and other wildlife. This is a definitive reference for native Southern flora.



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Listed below are patrons, benefactors, sustainers, and donors who gave between January 1 and December 1, 2013. The Southern Garden History Society thanks you for your generosity. To make a donation or increase your membership level to the Society, please visit [www.southerngardenhistory.org](http://www.southerngardenhistory.org) or call (336) 770-6723.

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### ***\*The Flora Ann Bynum Fund for the Southern Garden History Society***

was established in 2012 to be used as a true endowment. The principal is retained while a portion of the earned income helps support the Society in perpetuity. The fund, managed by the North Carolina Community Foundation, was initiated with \$25,000 from the Society with additional contributions to be made in the coming years. Members are welcome to contribute to this fund at any time.



Southern Garden History Society

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## Awards and Scholarships

The **Flora Ann Bynum Award** is the highest award bestowed by the Southern Garden History Society. It is not awarded annually, but only occasionally to recipients who have rendered outstanding service to the society. Nominations may be made at any time by any member. The award will usually be presented at the annual meeting.

The title **Honorary Director** (Board of Directors) may be bestowed on individuals who have rendered exceptional service and made significant contributions to the society. Nominations for Honorary Director are made to the President by current Board members and are approved by the Board of Directors.

The **Certificate of Merit** is presented to a member or non-member, whose work has advanced the mission and goals of the society. Awarding of certificates will be approved by the Board of Directors and will usually be announced at the annual meeting.

Society **Scholarships** assist students in attending the society's annual meeting and are awarded to bona fide students enrolled in college and university majors relevant to the mission and goals of the society. The scholarship provides a waiver of registration fees plus \$500 to assist with travel and lodging.

*Details, requirements, and directions for submitting applications are posted on the SGHS Web site: [www.southerngardenhistory.org](http://www.southerngardenhistory.org). For those without internet access, a copy of this document can be mailed or faxed. Contact Peggy Cornett, Magnolia editor.*

## Annual Membership Dues

The society's membership year is from **August 1—July 31**. The membership secretary will mail renewal notices in the summer for the 2013-2014 year. Membership categories:

<b>Benefactor</b>	<b>\$500</b>
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