



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

Magnolia

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A Chesapeake Falling Garden: Landon Carter's Sabine Hall

Mollie Ridout, Director of Horticulture, Historic Annapolis, Inc.

Terraced gardens are a tradition of landscape design extending backward in time wherever gardens have been created on hilly terrain. The Chesapeake falling garden can find its distant ancestors in classic gardens of Europe. Yet the Tidewater region brings much of its own character to the garden, beginning with the name.

The term falling garden, referring to the slopes between the terraces or flats, is fairly localized. Its use seems to be confined to the tidewater region of the Chesapeake, from the mid-eighteenth century into the early nineteenth century. We find Colonel William Byrd II using the term fall or falling garden as he describes notable Virginia gardens he has visited in the mid-eighteenth century. By the 1770s the term is familiar enough to be used in a Fredericksburg newspaper advertisement describing a lot "already well improved with a good falling garden" (Sarudy, 29).

In the same way, the rationale and the physical form of the falling garden in the Chesapeake region can trace its roots to England and France, but gains its own New World spin along the way.

English garden writers published manuals in the first half of the eighteenth century that established patterns for formal gardens and organized landscapes. Philip Miller's *Gardener's Dictionary*, first published in 1731, became a classic, and was revised and reissued seven times throughout the eighteenth century. Batty Langley's *New Principles of Gardening* (1728) likewise advised gardeners on plants, garden designs, and gardening techniques. Despite the fact that by mid-century Lancelot "Capability" Brown (1716-1783) was transforming English country estates into naturalistic rural vistas, many wealthy landowners of the Chesapeake region aspired to the highly



Photo by M. Ridout

Sabine Hall, central path on the parterre terrace.

designed layouts advocated by earlier writers.

The desire for a high order of control in the landscape may well be attributed to the ongoing struggle of American landowners to overcome the chaos of nature. No need for them to follow the style of their English counterparts by creating vast, and vastly expensive, landscapes of wildness when original wildness was apparent from their very doorsteps. When wild animals, and in the early days, unfriendly native Indians as well as unruly slaves and servants lurked about, a little show

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CALENDAR

Please visit the SGHS Web site, www.southerngardenhistory.org, for a complete and more detailed calendar with the latest updates and links to individual Web sites.

October 12-December 4, 2011, *Nature's Beloved Son: Rediscovering John Muir's Botanical Legacy*, a traveling exhibition hosted by the Cherokee Garden Library at the Atlanta History Center, held at McElreath Hall. This traveling exhibition "Nature's Beloved Son: Rediscovering John Muir's Botanical Legacy" traces his travels to Canada, Indiana, the American Southeast, California, and Alaska, and presents vivid images and specimens of the actual plants that Muir held in his hands, carried in his pockets, and preserved for all time. Visit: www.AtlantaHistoryCenter.com/CherokeeGardenLibrary or call (404) 814-4046.

November 3-4, 2011. "On the Ground: Putting Preservation into Practice," 2011 Historic Landscape Symposium, a Regional Meeting of the American Public Gardens Association, hosted by Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, Miami, FL. This symposium will provide you contact with the tools and resources needed to make informed decisions, develop a game plan, and then put those principles into practice. Keynote speaker, William Noble, Garden Conservancy. Vizcaya is a National Historic Landmark with one of the best Italianate gardens in the U.S. Visit: info@publicgardens.org.

November 18-19, 2011. "Second Wave of Modernism II: Landscape Complexity and Transformation," presented by the Cultural Landscape Foundation in concert with The Museum of Modern Art, New York City, NY. To investigate this significant evolution of professional practice, three groups of thematic presentations have been assembled that will collectively explore landscape transformations at residential, urban and metropolitan scales. For information visit: tclf.org

Dec. 5 (Philadelphia), Dec. 6 (New York City), Dec. 8 (Boston), 2011. "Lady Londonderry's Enduring Legacy at Mount Stewart," a lecture by Michael Buffin, Garden and Parks Advisor, National Trust of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The garden at Mount Stewart is one of the National Trust's beloved properties in Northern Ireland, but the garden owes much of its mystery, magic, and artistry to its creator, Edith Vane-Tempest-Stewart, Marchioness of Londonderry. www.royal-oak.org.

February 17, 2012. Southern Garden Heritage Conference, "Treasures Lost, History Saved: Our Southern Garden Heritage," at The State Botanical Garden of Georgia, Athens, GA. This informative daylong conference examines the importance of Garden Clubs and their efforts to stimulate understanding and appreciation of our garden heritage, perhaps the first step in successful conservation and preservation efforts. The program also highlights present-day landscape documentation efforts in Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia. Included are presentations regarding three iconic Southern plantations—Carter's Grove, Magnolia Plantation, and Stratford Hall, and the gardens each inspired. Visit: www.uga.edu/botgarden/eduregister.html; or call (706) 542-6156.

Atlanta History Center Lecture Series. February 22, 2012: Susan Haltom, *One Writer's Garden: Eudora Welty's Home Place*. **March 28, 2012:** Judith Tankard, *Gertrude Jekyll and the Country House Garden*. Both lectures will be held at 7:00 p.m. in McElreath Hall, Atlanta History Center, 130 West Paces Ferry Road, NW, Atlanta, GA 30305. (404) 814-4046 or scatron@atlantahistorycenter.com.

April 23, 2012. National Book Launch: An Evening with Peter Hatch. Celebrate the launch of Peter Hatch's "*A Rich Spot of Earth: Thomas Jefferson's Revolutionary Garden at Monticello*." This elegant garden party features the author as he discusses his pioneering new book, which tells the history of Jefferson's unique vegetable garden at Monticello and uncovers his lasting influence on American culinary, garden, and landscape history. The evening offers informal tours, fine Virginia wine, and heavy hors d'oeuvres. Reserved tickets required, call (434) 984-9880.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT: NEW LOCATION & DATE

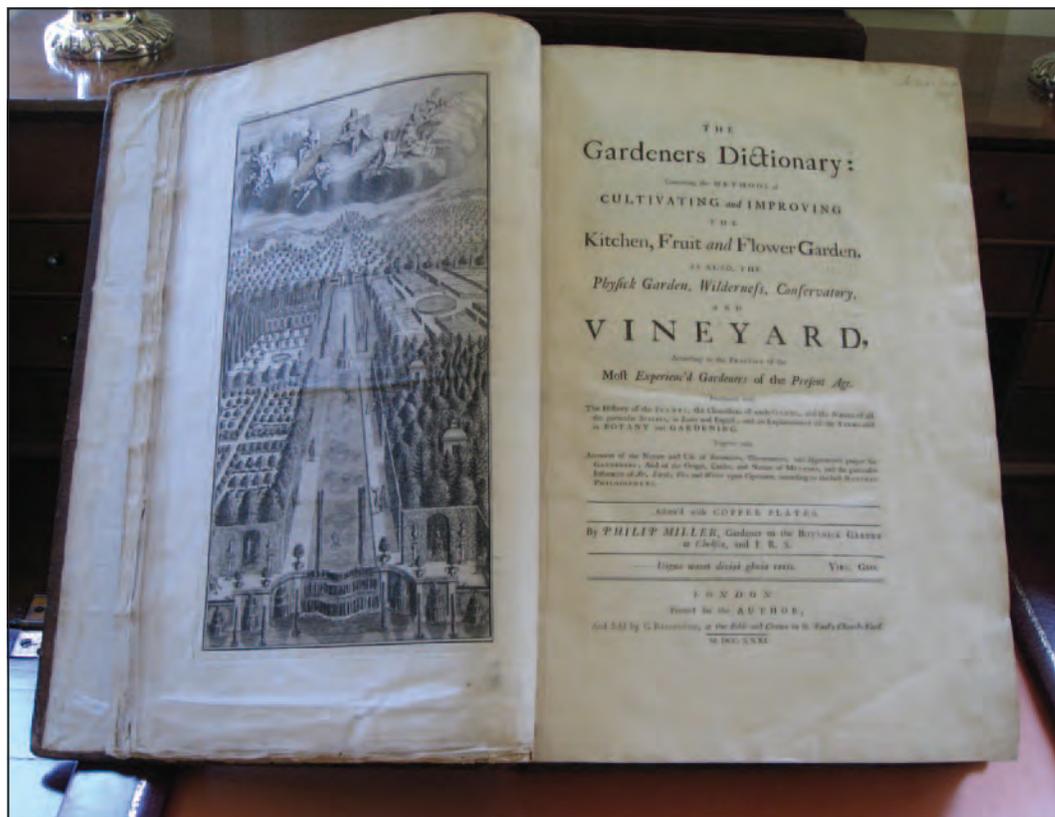
June 1-3, 2012. Annual Meeting of the Southern Garden History Society to be held in Richmond, VA. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the 2012 SGHS annual meeting will not be held in Ft. Myers, Florida. Our home base will be The Jefferson Hotel in historic downtown Richmond. Events are planned at Maymont and the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. Among the many exciting offerings is a Sunday optional tour to Tuckahoe, the boyhood home of Thomas Jefferson. Visit the Web site often for updates or email Dean Norton, dnorton@mountvernon.org.

A Chesapeake Falling Garden:..... (continued from page 1)

of control and power was very comforting near the house. At the same time, an appreciation for the vast natural resources and open space afforded by this continent—that in fact made the advancement of many of these gentlemen possible—was an appropriate backdrop to the geometric garden and deserved appreciation. And there was no need to create it artificially. In fact, these men of property did partake in the naturalistic English landscape movement by capitalizing on vistas across natural landscapes, but at the same time, they wanted and needed useful gardens close to the house, safe and peaceful spaces to walk, play, and converse.

Sabine Hall exhibits the classic form of the falling garden. The house (built 1738-1742) and garden were constructed by Landon Carter (1710-1778) and continue to be occupied by direct descendents. The house is positioned to afford a vista across acres of woods and farmland to the Rappahannock River. The property, near Warsaw, Virginia, is an expression of the eighteenth-century gentleman's trifecta—wealth, education, and aspiration. As a young man Landon Carter, son of Robert “King” Carter (1662/63-1732), inherited eight fully operational plantations and by his death at the age of 69 he owned 50,000 acres and about 500 slaves as well as other personal wealth. His education in England and at William and Mary College provided him with knowledge of classical ideals and architecture, as well as the principles of liberty and the rights of man. His education, his times, and his nature endowed him with a set of high ideals. He named his home after the Roman lyric-poet Horace's villa in the Sabine Hills outside Rome. Besides the classics, his library also included important garden manuals of his time, including Philip Miller's *Gardeners Dictionary* (1731), the Richard Bradley translation of Georg Andreas Agricola's *Experimental Husbandman and Gardener* (1726), and Stephen Switzer's *Practical Husbandman and Planter* (1733).

In its original form, which is now somewhat altered, the house consisted of a central block and two



Philip Miller's The Gardener's Dictionary, London, 1731 edition.

unconnected dependencies; a New World expression in brick of the Palladian ideal (from the sixteenth-century Italian architect Andrea Palladio). From this layout Carter drew the geometry of his garden. It was close to 200 feet wide, extending the width of the house and dependencies. The garden front of the house faced out over steeply rolling country to a distant view of the Rappahannock River. The garden was formed into six deep terraces, organizing the steeply sloping landscape into a series of flats and falls. A central path, six feet wide, divided each flat and connected the levels by means of a grass ramp. It was typical that these ramps were kept in grass and did not have flights of steps built into them. The falls at Sabine Hall were steeper than usual, in fact in his old age Carter complains that his hip is “almost disjointed” after walking in the garden.

The layout of the garden conforms to Philip Miller's recommendations by taking its dimension from the size of the house. One enters the garden by a flight of at least three steps, thus keeping the house dry and wholesome and enhancing the view of the garden as one exits the house. Miller then calls for flat compartments of turf, pleasing to the eye and within sight of the house, succeeded by geometric beds and flat walks. Carter calls this first level of the garden his bowling green. Whether or not Carter was in the habit of playing bowls, this area

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A Chesapeake Falling Garden:..... (continued from page 3)

served as the immediate framework for the house and its maintenance was a concern. Carter makes note of efforts to keep the bowling green trimmed, recording in 1770 that he had turned his ewes out on the bowling green (Greene, 371). A few years later he tries a worker named Talbot who shaved the bowling green, observing: “he seems to do it well, but he is very slow” (Greene, 673).

The next level of the garden was laid out in a formal parterre, two squares about 100’ on a side, with a pattern of geometric shapes created by two to three foot wide paths made of local gravel.

The exact pattern of the parterres at Sabine Hall has not been traced to any particular source; it may have been Carter’s own creation. While the two halves of the garden are not mirror images of each other, they offer a pleasing reflection, flipped over front to back as well as side to side. The eighteenth-century layout of these paths has survived to this day without being altered, according to family history. While the design seems to have endured over the years, the plantings in the beds have changed over time, following the fashion of the day or the capabilities of the gardener. Landon Carter initially used this area to showcase his collection of flowering bulbs. He also mentioned roses and wildflowers, as well as a tree in each of the circular beds. From Carter’s diary we know that Miller’s recommendation was wise, to locate these formal gardens near the house “for the oftner recourse and diligence to be bestowed of the owner” (Miller, no page number).

But Carter the planter and husbandman had his practical side. In 1777 he wrote:

As the weather was so dry last year as to kill nearly all my bulbous flower roots in my river front garden, I thought of turning that ground to advantage in the way of cows to be fed in the winter, and had it all pricked off in lines about a foot asunder and sown with turnips. It proved a very fine crop, and answered its proposed end much.... This makes me, as an old man, think it an excellent scheme, especially as my Colic will not let me,



Aerial photo of Sabine Hall showing the bowling green and parterre.

Photo by David King Gleason

as I used to do, walk out and enjoy the pleasure of flowers. I shall therefore order the ground to be new dunged and intend to continue this turnip Project (Greene, 1095).

Thus a garden evolves as the resources and skills of the gardener permit, sometimes in surprising directions.

The lower terraces were put to more utilitarian plantings. The third terrace was probably planted in “small fruits,”—strawberries, raspberries, or grapes—as planted today. And the lower terraces were deep enough to have accommodated orchard trees without interrupting the view. Now these terraces retain their form but are merely mowed grass plots. A separate vegetable garden is thought to have been located beyond the boxwoods east of the parterre terrace.

The physical form of this garden is classic, the concept most likely taken from one of the garden manuals that Landon Carter owned and applied to his sloping front yard with an almost perfect fit. Following the literature of the time, he created screens of boxwood hedges to hide the mundane scene of a vegetable garden close to the house, placed his fruit production areas on a level below the sight line, and capitalized on the expansive natural landscape. But we see also the practical husbandman asserting himself, as he gives up on the ornamental schemes learned from books and turns his terrace to the cultivation of turnips. Throughout the extensive diary entries that chronicled the second half of his life, his focus is on crops, yields, and fieldwork and we see this preoccupation taking

precedence over the small pleasures of the imported flower garden.

Yet in the two centuries since, the Carter descendants have done justice to his original vision of a commanding landscape presiding over an expansive view. Garden manuals of the time warned the designer to consider how the garden will look in 20 or 30 years, when the plants have matured. Here, the garden's essence has prevailed for close to three centuries. In early twentieth century photographs we see evidence of a garden densely planted with ornamental shrubs and perennials. Today a spare planting of crape myrtle, iris and herbs reminds us of an earlier time, while bespeaking the realistic capabilities of a modern household. Nonetheless, the gardens are framed by boxwood dating from Landon Carter's time. Those plantings together with the original paths, makes this garden a testament to one family's longevity and stewardship.

Our understanding of this garden can be greatly enhanced by examining how it was constructed. The French garden designer Antoine-Joseph Dezallier D'Argenville (1680-1765) published a detailed text on Renaissance French garden style. The book was translated into English as the *Theory and Practice of Gardening* in 1728, just a few years before Carter built Sabine Hall. The text affords the most detailed information available

about the construction of terraces. The author points out that the construction of terraces and stairs is the most expensive part of making a garden, and the one requiring the most care, and yet it "does the least Credit to its master." Because, if done well, "we are apt to think...that it must have been disposed so by Nature." "Works of this kind, we must have seen them performed, for they are hardly to be apprehended, when finished and complete." (D'Argenville, 116) This is easy to understand as we gaze at Carter's terraces melded so effectively into the hillside above the Rappahannock.

D'Argenville explains the surveying instruments, in particular the graphometer (or semicircle) and its use in laying out straight lines, parallel lines and right angles, as well as various geometric figures. A water level or common level is used to smooth out uneven ground or make an irregular slope even. He diagrams the geometry of cutting a slope into terraces, using stakes and lines to ensure an even slope. It is preferable that the slopes be cut into solid earth rather than built up of loose earth. But if the latter is necessary, "loose banks must be stabilized by laying hurdles of willow boughs along the slope. Over this Wattle work you lay the turf after covering it with a little Earth." (D'Argenville, 124)

Then he gets down to the essential issue, how to

(continued on page 11)



Sabine Hall parterres looking South in the direction of the Rappahannock River.

Photo by M. Ridout

“A New World: Naturalists & Artists in the American South,” A Review of the 2011 RSGL Conference

By Davyd Foard Hood, Conference Co-chair, *Isinglass, Vale, North Carolina*

Following the 2009 conference, when the planning committee met, appraised it, and considered themes for the 2011 conference, the concept for this one quickly gained acceptance. The Bartrams, Mark Catesby, John Custis, and André Michaux were well known to us. We had a lesser acquaintance with John Abbot, but knew very little about Philip Henry Gosse. We had heard of books soon to be published. Foremost among them was Andrea Wulf’s new work on the first presidents, their botanical interests, and horticultural practices. A book we now know as *The Founding Gardeners*. We were also aware that a conference focused on naturalists and artists in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth century South was a departure from the traditional themes and programs these biennial conferences had addressed in the past. “Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes,” the over-arching title of the conference, reflects our usual consideration of garden restorations, preservation projects, heirloom plants and plant lists, garden archaeology, and the evolving character of Southern garden history. As speakers were identified, invited to speak, and their acceptances came in, a new and refreshing momentum developed. As a committee we saw great promise for this conference as a means of addressing a critically important area of garden history, one larger than our usual Southern purview, one that was international in scope. The response to the conference and attendance has been gratifying; and the audience, which was at capacity, overwhelmingly agreed that the speakers exceeded all expectations.

Beginning with Andrea Wulf’s keynote address, conventions have been demolished, and a fuller, richer, and altogether more appealing appreciation of great men and their gardening has been gained in the balance. The narrow one sided political roles of Washington, Jefferson, Adams, and James Madison have been broadened, and we now see them as three-dimensional figures, men who had to manage plantations while also waging war and building a nation.

With simple, clear language—and the pattern of a teacher, Kathryn Holland Braund deconstructed the notion of John and William Bartram exploring a pristine Eden. Instead, she placed them in a landscape long inhabited and shaped by Native Americans, whose trails and trading paths they followed and made discoveries along the way.

In 1998 I had seen many of Mark Catesby’s original



Photo by W. Welch

Gardens at Reynolda House Museum.



Photo by S. Gant

Lou Hatch with speaker Kathryn Holland Braund at MESDA.

watercolors, on loan from Her Majesty, at an exhibition in Williamsburg. James Reveal beautifully contrasted their brilliant character to the sometimes paler colorations seen in the engravings and later printings of his seminal work. Catesby’s skill as an artist—and colorist of nature—was reappraised and elevated.

In a world approaching the “Silent Spring” Rachel Carson warned us to avoid, John V. Calhoun’s stylish presentation on John Abbot and his butterflies was welcome. Today we must envy John Abbot his experience of a South and its myriad butterflies we can only know from his watercolors. Calhoun’s masterfully constructed PowerPoint presentation further enlivened Abbot’s life and work.

Gary Mullen introduced us to the work of Philip Henry Gosse, an Englishman who lived in the South for a

brief eight months. But his was a remarkable achievement. We are grateful to professor Mullen also for *Philip Henry Gosse: Science and Art in Letters From Alabama and Entomologia Alabamensis*. It is the first of four books by Gosse which the University of Alabama Press is seeing into print.

Since 1979 we have attended Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes Conferences in Old Salem and taken its Moravian history on faith—so to speak. Friday afternoon’s session and its speakers enriched our understanding of a place and a people we thought we knew, but now realize we had under-valued. C. Daniel Crews established the Moravians in Europe and transplanted them to an American Wachovia by way of Georgia and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Martha Hartley elegantly recounted the work of Phillip Christian Gottlieb Reuter, overlaying his footsteps in eighteenth-century Wachovia with her own 200 years later. Doing so, we appreciate Reuter’s role as a town planner in colonial North Carolina and the fragile vestiges of his hand that survive in a challenged landscape. Lee Bynum Schwall built on her Mother’s research on Ludwig David von Schweinitz and gave voice to the writings of one naturalist to another. The letters von Schweinitz wrote John Le Conte document one professional friendship in the early-nineteenth-century South and add dimension to the role of Mr. Le Conte who was also a patron of John Abbot. The afternoon visits to the Moravian Archives and Salem College provided all too brief but welcome first-time looks at the treasures of both institutions.

In the Saturday morning session, we joined four important naturalists in their gardens, metaphorically if not literally. Peter Hatch celebrated the enviable correspondence between John Custis and Peter Collinson. The Custis garden in Williamsburg, known to Thomas Jefferson, is no more, but lives in the letters published in *Brothers of the Spade*. As explorers, naturalists, writers, and nurserymen, John and William Bartram occupy a unique station in American horticultural history. Their garden on the bank of the Schuylkill River, where father and son cultivated Southern plants for shipment to England and other climes, holds a like status. Joel T. Fry re-introduced us to the men and their garden. With gardens in New Jersey and South Carolina, André Michaux both imported plants into America and exported American plants to France. Sadly, neither garden survives. The significance of both gardens, however, was well-described by Charlie Williams, a tireless champion of Michaux and his contributions to garden history.

In years past the conferences have ended with the Saturday morning session, closing comments, and warm good-bys. Knowing that everyone at the conference usually takes lunch before departing Winston-Salem, the planning committee decided to extend the schedule

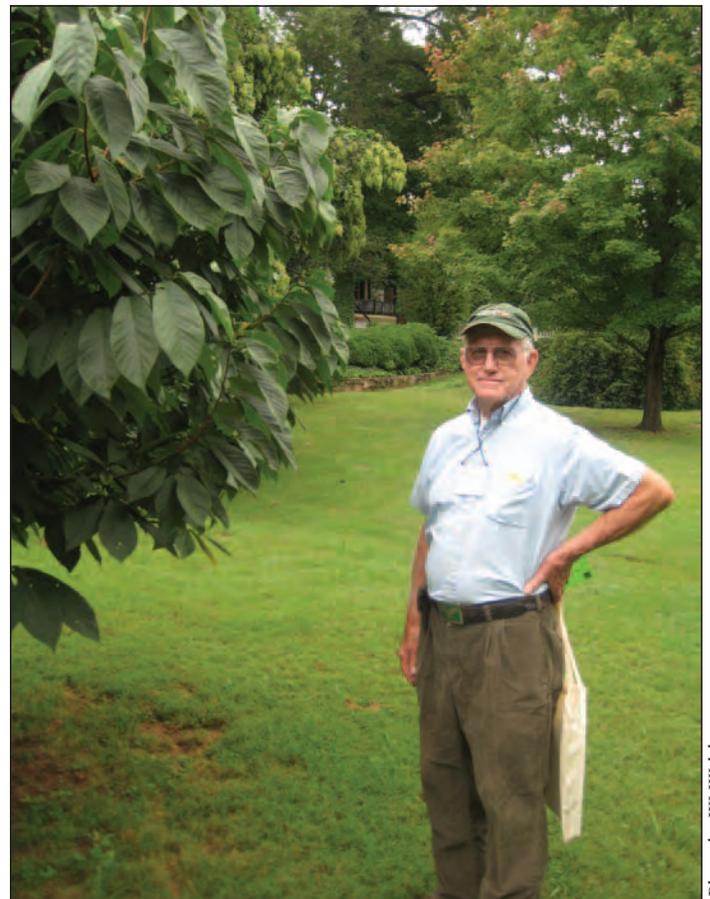
this year and provide lunch. Doing so, we also had the opportunity to add another speaker to the program, Robert McCartney, a twenty-first-century naturalist and nurseryman in Aiken, South Carolina.

[Davyd Hood’s fellow co-chairs for the 2011 Conference were Phil Archer, Reynolda House Museum, and Sally Gant, Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts. The conference planning committee consisted of 12 members and included representatives from Reynolda House Museum of American Art and Old Salem Museums & Gardens.]



Keynote speaker Andrea Wulf with Lucille and Bill Welch.

Photo by S. Gant



Modern-day plant hunter Robert McCartney, from Woodlanders Nursery.

Photo by W. Welch

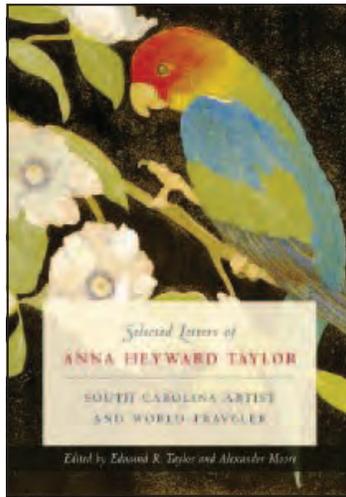
Book Reviews

Selected Letters of Anna Heyward Taylor: South Carolina Artist and World Traveler, edited by Edmund R. Taylor and Alexander Moore / The University of South Carolina Press / November 2010 / hardcover, 360 pages, 79 illustrations / ISBN: 978-1-57003-945-4 / list price \$39.95

Beginning in the eighteenth century with Mark Catesby and Georg D. Ehret, artists have produced images of the genus *Magnolia* that have become icons of their era. *Magnolia virginiana*, identified as the “Sweet Flowering Bay,” appears in Catesby’s watercolors of the Blue Gross-beak, a pairing of the Painted Finch and Blue Linnet, and alone, in bloom with the foliage of *Magnolia acuminata*, in another work. His magnificent *Magnolia grandiflora* was adopted for the masthead of our newsletter in 1984 and first appeared on the Fall issue for that year.

Martin Johnson Heade’s celebration of the *Magnolia grandiflora* came late in his career. Heade (1819-1904) first executed plant portraits of apple blossoms in the 1860s, and in the 1870s he produced dazzling orchids, most often with hummingbirds, based on the experience of three trips to Latin America. In March 1883 Martin Johnson Heade settled in St. Augustine, Florida, and began painting both Cherokee roses and Magnolias. Composed branches of *Magnolia grandiflora*, in bloom and bud, were placed against velvet, like precious gems in a jeweler’s establishment.

Anna Heyward Taylor (1879-1956), the Columbia-born South Carolina artist who achieved fame as a member of the Charleston Renaissance, knew the work of both Mark Catesby and Martin Johnson Heade. By 1929, when she moved permanently to Charleston, Miss Taylor’s talents had been honed by study, travel, and experience. Her Presbyterian schooling was broadened by study at the New York School of Art, the Art Students League, and with William Merritt Chase in summer painting tours in the Netherlands in 1903 and in London in 1904. There she met John Singer Sargent and marveled in James A. M. Whistler’s Peacock Room. The weeks in London introduced her to Japonism and the arts of the East that prompted a trip, a decade later, to Japan, which



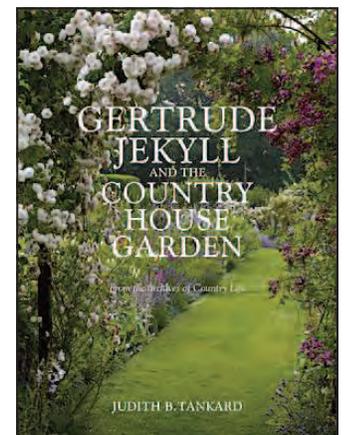
deepened her interest in printmaking. In 1916 she studied woodblock printing in Provincetown and learned the process of “white-line printing that allowed an artist to make multi-colored prints from a single carved block.”

Like Martin Johnson she was attracted to South America and in 1916 and 1920 she traveled to British Guiana with William Beebe, a scientist-explorer. On the first trip she was employed as a scientific illustrator on Mr. Beebe’s staff; on the second trip she was an unpaid volunteer, a status that allowed her to undertake both scientific illustrations and watercolors, drawings, and gouaches of the native flora and fauna that would reappear in finished works throughout her career. On 17 January 1921, soon after her return to the United States, the *Christian Science Monitor* published “British Guiana Flowers” in which she described the particular combination of scientific observation and artistic creativity that would characterize her work for the next quarter-century.

Edmund R. Taylor, her nephew, and his co-author, Alexander Moore, recall these events and her other travels in an excellent biographical sketch in the opening pages of *Selected Letters of Anna Heyward Taylor: South Carolina Artist and World Traveler*. It precedes a series of letters to friends and family, and mainly to her sister “Nell,” Ellen Elmore Taylor, and others from friends and colleagues, including William Merritt Chase, to her. The illustrations comprise photographs, many black and white woodblock prints, and thirty-four color reproductions of her work including both “*Magnolia Grandiflora*” and “*Macrophylla*,” and affecting images of Charleston’s flower and vegetable sellers.

Gertrude Jekyll and the Country House Garden, From the Archives of Country Life, by Judith B. Tankard / Aurum Press Ltd, UK / hardcover, 192 pages / May 2011 / ISBN: 9781845136246; ISBN-10: 1845136241 / list price \$74.95

Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) enjoys a status in garden history neither equaled nor excelled by another woman in her lifetime, in the century preceding her birth, or in the long years of the twentieth century following her death. She walked into garden history in 1875 when she called on William Robinson



(1838-1935), editor of *The Garden*, at his office in Covent Garden. She was soon writing botanical notes for the magazine, first above the initials "G. J.," and in 1881 as "G. Jekyll, Munstead, Godmaling." William Robinson returned her visit, traveling in 1880 to Munstead House in Surrey, where Miss Jekyll lived with her Mother from 1876 to her death in 1895. The garden at Munstead House, conceived and planted by Gertrude Jekyll under the influence of Robinson's *The Wild Garden* (1870), enthralled Mr. Robinson. Some two years later William Goldring, the assistant editor of *The Garden*, extolled her accomplishment in an article, "Never before have we seen hardy plants set out so well or cultivated in such a systematic way." He continued his praise describing the Munstead House border as "the richest and most effective border of hardy flowers that we know of near London." The die was cast. Gertrude Jekyll was launched on a career as a plantswoman, landscape gardener, and writer whose output was prolific and long-lived, ending a half-century later with her death on 8 December 1932. William Robinson attended her funeral. He followed her to rest on 7 May 1935.

The tribute to her genius came quickly. H. Avray Tipping (1855-1933), her long time friend and a fellow writer for the magazine *Country Life*, penned an immediate tribute.

"Who of us that are gardeners to-day have not profited by the experience and teaching of this entirely capable woman, easily efficient in all she set out to know and to do? She opened our eyes to the possibilities of the herbaceous border, of the woodland garden, of the bulb-set glade. . . . She was no mere theorist but a practical worker (and) her books are the fruits of long experience, critically treated and plainly set forth."

Francis Jekyll's biography of his aunt, *Gertrude Jekyll: A Memoir*, was published in 1934. Reprints of her books followed.

While two World Wars claimed many of her gardens and their gardeners, her essential influence survived on the printed page. Gardeners and writers have turned since to the dozen important garden books she wrote (two with co-authors Lawrence Weaver and Christopher Hussey), over 100 articles and horticultural notes that appeared above her name in *Country Life*, a similar, if not larger, number published in other magazines and journals, the records of some 250 garden design projects preserved in the archives of the University of California at Berkeley, and the luminescent photographs of Munstead Wood and other houses and gardens made by Charles Latham that appeared in *Country Life* from 1898 until 1912.

A renaissance in Jekyll studies, amounting to nothing short of a deserved hagiography, began in 1982 with Jane Brown's *Gardens of a Golden Afternoon, The Story of a Partnership: Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll*; it has

continued to the present work, *Gertrude Jekyll and the Country House Garden, From the Archives of Country Life*, written by Judith B. Tankard. Gertrude Jekyll's books were reprinted in the 1980s by both the Ayer Company in this country and the Antique Collectors Club in England. Others have written of her life, her gardens, and the Edwardian age in which they flourished. Miss Tankard contributed to this resurgence at an early date, in 1989, when her (and co-author Michael Van Valkenburgh's) *Gertrude Jekyll: A Vision of Garden and Wood* was published. She joined forces with Martin Wood in the production of *Gertrude Jekyll at Munstead Wood* (1996).

For *Gertrude Jekyll and the Country House Garden*, Miss Tankard turned to the archives of the magazine *Country Life* that was founded in 1897 by Edward Hudson (1858-1936) for whom Miss Jekyll and Edwin Lutyens collaborated at Deanery Garden and Lindisfarne Castle. She marshals this important collection as the basis of five essays titled after those of five of Gertrude Jekyll's books: *Home and Garden*, *Gardens Old and New*, *Gardens for Small Country Houses*, *Colour in the Flower Garden*, and *Garden Ornament*. These are illustrated by both black and white period photographs and contemporary color views. The first of these five chapters, "Home and Garden," is devoted entirely, rightly to an account of Munstead Wood and features five autochromes of the garden and its borders that record the extraordinary colorations crafted by Miss Jekyll. Another star in this series is Miss Tankard's treatment of the gardens at The Manor House, Upton Grey, which have been brilliantly restored by the present owners utilizing the original plans preserved at Berkeley. "Doing so," the author writes, "they have created one of the most authentic of all the Jekyll restorations." (Her account of the garden and the splendid photographs by Paul Barker are the basis of a short article on the garden, "Unravelling Jekyll's riddle," that appeared in the 21 September issue of *Country Life*.)

Judith Tankard opens this most recent study of Gertrude Jekyll with a short, elegant sketch of her life illustrated with a reproduction of William Nicholson's 1921 portrait of the gardener and photographs of three distinguished friends: Edward Hudson, H. Avray Tipping, and Sir Edwin Lutyens. Her collaborations with Lutyens, who designed Munstead Wood, produced some of the most remarkable country houses and gardens of the early twentieth century. He, arguably, knew her as well or better than any of the host of colleagues and clients they counted as friends. On the stone he designed for her grave his inscription is concise, remembering her simply, as Judith Tankard notes, as "Artist, Gardener, Craftswoman."

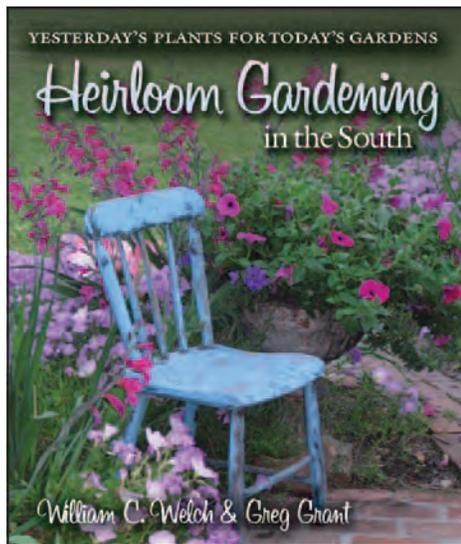
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In Print

The following recently published books are authored by members of the Southern Garden History Society. Visit www.southerngardenhistory.org/resources for more listings of notable books including those by SGHS members.

Heirloom Gardening in the South: Yesterday's Plants for Today's Gardens, by William C. Welch PhD and Greg Grant, with forward by Felder Rushing; contributors Cynthia Mueller and Jason Powell: TAMU Press, College Station / durable binding paperback, 544 pages / ISBN-10: 1603442138; ISBN-13: 978-1603442138 / April 2011 / List Price \$29.95

This is a new, expanded edition of the 1995 classic work on Southern heirloom plants by Bill Welch and Greg Grant, both currently serving on the board of the Southern Garden History Society. *Heirloom Gardening in the South* is a comprehensive resource that also offers a

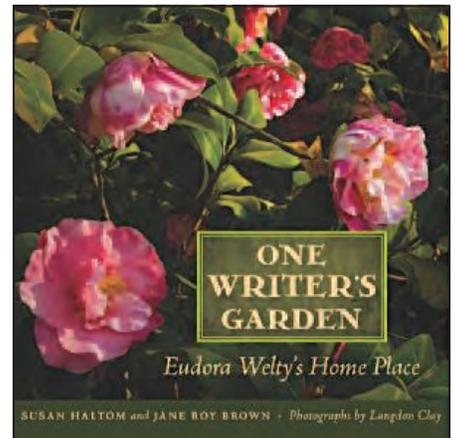


captivating, personal encounter with two dedicated and passionate gardeners from Texas whose love of heritage gardening infuses the work from beginning to end. The superb photographs generously assembled in this volume—most of which were taken by the authors—illustrate stunning close-up portraits as well as images of plants in their natural setting in southern gardens. In addition to extensive sections on regional garden history, this volume includes new essays on naturalizing daffodils, garden design, growing fruit, and other topics. Most useful for the garden enthusiast and landscape historian alike, this edition features a completely updated and expanded heirloom plant encyclopedia with revised plant lists (including bulbs, cemetery plants, and others). In the Forward, Felder Rushing writes: “This book is more than a primer for new gardeners; it’s a crucial research reference for writers and academics looking to glean special insights. And it is a treasure trove for lovers of Southern gardens and culture.” Fittingly, Bill and Greg chose to dedicate their latest book to the memory of four amazing women

who have made a lasting impression on the Southern landscape and on the Southern Garden History Society: Diane Welch, Flora Ann Bynum, Pam Puryear, and Florence Griffin. *Heirloom Gardening in the South* deserves a place on every Southern gardener’s book shelf.

One Writer's Garden: Eudora Welty's Home Place, by Susan Haltom and Jane Roy Brown, with photographs by Langdon Clay / University Press of MS / hardcover, 304 pages / ISBN-10: 1617031194; ISBN-13: 978-1617031199 / September 2011 / List Price \$35

Near the end of her life, Eudora Welty (1909-2001) still resided in her parents’ house in Jackson, Mississippi, but the modest garden she nurtured with her mother, Chestina Welty, had all but vanished. Local garden designer,



and former SGHS board member, Susan Haltom offered to help bring back Chestina Welty’s garden and, in so doing, the memories of Eudora Welty’s life. Susan Haltom went on to launch a historic restoration of the ¾ acre property in Jackson’s Belhaven neighborhood and, in *One Writer's Garden*, Haltom and Jane Roy Brown draw connections between Eudora Welty’s gardening and her writing. They show how the garden echoed the prevailing style of her mother’s generation, which mirrored trends in American life: Progressive-era optimism, a rising middle class, prosperity, new technology, women’s clubs, garden clubs, streetcar suburbs, civic beautification, conservation, plant introductions, and garden writing. The authors illustrate this garden’s history—and the broader story of how American gardens evolved in the early twentieth century, with images of contemporary garden literature, seed catalogs, and advertisements, as well as unique historic photographs. Noted landscape photographer Langdon Clay captures the restored garden through the seasons. This book contains many previously unpublished writings, including literary passages and excerpts from Welty’s private correspondence about the garden. [For more information about the Eudora Welty Foundation, Inc., visit: eudorawelty.org]

A Chesapeake Falling Garden:..... (continued from page 5)

move so much earth. A successful design will balance the cutting and filling of slopes so that no earth has to be taken from or brought to the site, thus reducing labor. But nonetheless, much work is required to create the terraces. He compares the use of men with wheelbarrows against the use of “panniers carried by asses.” He recommends the use of asses, for they can carry twice as much as a wheelbarrow, and require only a woman or small boy to lead them. If you rely on men with wheelbarrows, “twill be absolutely necessary to have People set over them to hasten them... to prevent their holding Discourse, and loitering the Time away one with another...” Asses on the other hand “loiter but little, they are used to a certain Pace, which, tho slow, forwards the Work however.” (D’Argenville, 109)

Slopes should be proportioned, length to rise, “that they be not too steep.” Where grass slopes are used instead of steps, they must extend as far as possible, to avoid too steep of an ascent. “To hinder the torrents of wet from spoiling them, there are checks of grass, or wood, laid at certain distances, to turn the water off to the sides.” (D’Argenville, 126)

Clearly, a terraced garden is not possible without a considerable labor force that can be spared from field work, nor without an education in the use of survey instruments and the application of geometry as much as an appreciation of aesthetics. It is here that the background and education of men like Landon Carter is essential in the creation of the Chesapeake falling garden.

Landon Carter’s landscape at Sabine Hall, carefully preserved by generations of direct descendents, exemplifies an American take on European tradition. The formal

terraced garden, measured and constructed according to classical principles, creates order within an expansive semi-controlled American landscape, giving notice that the American landowner lives in the midst of chaotic nature, enjoying its rich bounty while mastering intricate patterns and safe spaces in the domain of the dwelling place.

[This paper is the first of three articles on the topic of falling gardens of the Chesapeake, to appear in future issues of *Magnolia*. The paper was presented in its entirety at Stratford Hall’s “Cultural Landscape Symposium,” October 2010. The author wishes to thank Kenneth M. McFarland, former director of education at Stratford Hall, who provided invaluable assistance throughout the development of the lecture and subsequent papers.]

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- Sarudy, Barbara Wells. *Gardens and Gardening in the Chesapeake 1700-1805*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 1998.
- Aerial photo is by David King Gleason and appears in his book *Virginia Plantation Homes* published in 1989 by LSU press.

Members in the News

George Washington’s Mount Vernon, the **Anne Spencer House and Garden** in Lynchburg, Virginia, and **Longue Vue Gardens** in New Orleans, Louisiana are included in the July 2011 issue No. 25 of *Historic Gardens Review*, “The Voice of Historic Parks and Gardens Worldwide” out of London. The six-page lead article features recent work at Mount Vernon. Long Vue Gardens and the Anne Spencer House, including the restoration work of Hillside Garden Club spearheaded by **Jane White**, are highlighted in “The Optimist” column.

Dean Norton was interviewed on CSPAN talking about the recently restored pleasure garden at **Mount Vernon** and with chef Walter Staib, host of the popular cooking show, “Taste of History.”

The Great Rosarians of the World™ celebrated its 11th annual lecture series, January 22-23, 2011, at The Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California, by honoring **Ruth Knopf** who is best known for preserving the Noisette roses she has discovered in the American South. Mrs. Knopf was honored in New York on June 11, as part of the Great Rosarians of the World™ 2011 festivities. See: www.greatrosarians.com

The Richmond-based PBS gardening series “Virginia Home Grown” featured **Beate Jensen** and her work to develop native warm-season grass meadows at Gari Melchers Home and Studio in Fredericksburg. The show aired August 30 and can be viewed at: <http://ideastations.org/tv>. For more on her meadow restoration at the Melchers estate, see *Magnolia*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, 2010.



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. 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 2010-2011 year. Membership categories:

Benefactor	\$500
Patron	\$250
Sustainer	\$100
Institution or Business	\$75
Joint	\$50
Individual	\$30
Student	\$15

For more membership information, contact:
Virginia Hart, Membership Coordinator
Post Office Box 15752
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Memberships can now be made electronically on our Web site!
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