



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

# Magnolia

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## Painshill: Remaking Elysium on Time

*By Mark Laird, Professor, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, and Planting Consultant and Associate Director, Painshill Park Trust*

2011 will be the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's visit to Painshill in Surrey, England. On April 1, 1786 he started a tour of some of the gardens described by Thomas Whately in *Observations on Modern Gardening* (1770). By April 2, Jefferson had reached Painshill, having chalked up a quick succession of visits with equally quick assessments: Chiswick "shows still too much art"; Hampton Court "Old fashioned"; and Claremont "Nothing remarkable." At Painshill, he gave the servants seven shillings for showing him around Charles Hamilton's masterpiece (1738-1773). By then it was in the hands of Benjamin Bond Hopkins, whose new house Mr. Jefferson found "ill situated."

Jefferson's notes on Painshill were, like those on William Kent's Esher Place, attentive, mixing plaudits with censure. He grumbled that "there is too much evergreen," but he liked the Temple of Bacchus: "a Doric temple, beautiful." This was praise indeed and well deserved. After William Kent's death in 1748 Hamilton had emerged as the "top man of taste" in England. But he overreached financially and was obliged to sell up in 1773.

2011 should be the year of visits to Painshill Park: garden clubs or individuals following in the footsteps of Mr. Jefferson, but perhaps choosing June or July, rather than April, for the best flowering effects. (John Adams, visiting in June 1786, declared: "Paines Hill is the most striking Piece of Art, that I have yet seen.") Even November can be a lovely time to visit (fig. 1). Coming into its 30<sup>th</sup> year of restoration, Painshill is still a work in progress. But with restored vineyard (fig. 2) and reconstructed Turkish Tent and Hermitage, and with replanted and maturing Amphitheatre and Alpine Valley (fig. 3), the park has never looked better. In the



*Figure 1; The 14-acre lake at the heart of Painshill, with the Gothic Temple in the background and the Grotto centre right beneath one of Hamilton's surviving cedars of Lebanon. November 2008.*

Amphitheatre, beneath a towering cedar of Lebanon and near a venerable cork oak flourish young *Magnolia grandiflora*, the "top tree of taste," as it were, in eighteenth-century English gardens (fig. 4).

Jefferson, in censuring the "evergreens," perhaps failed to realize that many of these were American evergreens—pines as well as the *Magnolia* itself. In 1756

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# CALENDAR

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

**September 19, 2010-January 9, 2011. Exhibition:** **Arcimboldo, 1526-1593: Nature and Fantasy**, at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Sixteen examples of the fantastic composite heads painted by Giuseppe Arcimboldo featured in their first appearance in the U.S. Additional works by Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Dürer. For more information, visit [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov).

**October 13, 2010. Cherokee Garden Library at the Atlanta History Center** feature author **James R. Cothran**, discusses his new book, *Charleston Gardens and the Landscape Legacy of Loutrel Briggs*, celebrating the Garden Library's 35th Anniversary. All proceeds benefit the endowment of the CGL in honor of James R. Cothran. For information, please call (404) 814-4046 or email [scatron@atlantahistorycenter.com](mailto:scatron@atlantahistorycenter.com).

**October 15-16, 2010. The 22nd Annual Southern Garden Symposium & Workshops.** St. Francisville, LA. Speakers include David Creech, historian William Seale, and ethno-botanist Mark Plotkin. For more information, call (225) 635-3738 or visit [www.SouthernGardenSymposium.org](http://www.SouthernGardenSymposium.org).

**October 22-24, 2010. The third Northern Neck Cultural Landscape Symposium.** Stratford Hall, Stratford, VA. This third symposium in the series will study the region's formal landscapes of the colonial and early national periods, examining closely the gardens and "big house" landscapes that were necessary complements to colonial plantation seats. For additional information, email [info@stratfordhall.org](mailto:info@stratfordhall.org).

**November 5, 2010. The Cultural Landscape Foundation and the Cherokee Garden Library at the Atlanta History Center** will host a Pioneer Regional Symposium to celebrate the recent publication of *Shaping the American Landscape: New Profiles from the Pioneers of American Landscape Design Project*. For more information, contact TCLF at (202) 483.0553 or [info@tclf.org](mailto:info@tclf.org).

**November 30-December 2, 2010.** "Historic Tree

Preservation Workshop," presented by the National Center for Preservation Technology & Training (NCPTT). Arborists and horticulturists from the Nat. Forest Service and the NPS Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation are session leaders. On-site venues are at Kenmore in Fredericksburg, and George Washington Birthplace Nat. Monument, Colonial Beach, VA. For information, visit: [www.ncptt.nps.gov/training/](http://www.ncptt.nps.gov/training/) or contact Debbie Smith at [debbie\\_smith@nps.gov](mailto:debbie_smith@nps.gov).

**February 18, 2011. Southern Garden Heritage Conference.** The State Botanical Garden of Georgia, Athens, GA. Speakers and topics to be announced. For more information, contact Anne Shenk at (706) 542-6158 or [askenk@uga.edu](mailto:askenk@uga.edu) or visit [www.uga.edu/botgarden](http://www.uga.edu/botgarden).

**April 1-3, 2011. Mark your calendars! Southern Garden History Society Annual Meeting.** The 29th Annual Meeting, "River Capitol: Bridging Landscapes of the Old and New South," will be held in Baton Rouge, LA. See article by John Sykes, "The Absolute South." Paper proposals are due Nov. 15, 2010; email to Anne Legett, [wlegett@cox.net](mailto:wlegett@cox.net).

**September 22-24, 2011. Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes. Winston-Salem, NC.** "*A New World: Naturalists and Artists in the American South*." Set your sites on this highly regarded conference, held biennially at Old Salem in Winston-Salem, NC. More information is forthcoming in future issues of *Magnolia*.

**SGHS Annual Meetings on the Horizon:** **2012 Annual Meeting** will be held in Ft. Myers, Florida, date to be announced. The meeting coordinator is Chris Pendleton, President and CEO Edison & Ford Winter Estates.

**2013 Annual Meeting** will take place in Lynchburg, Virginia, May 4-6. Board member Jane White is coordinating the meeting and promises visits to Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest, the Anne Spencer Garden, Saunders Boxwood Nursery, and Pharsalia.

**2014 Annual Meeting** is slated for a return to Savannah, Georgia, date TBD. Meeting coordinator is Lucy Hitch.

## *Painshill: Remaking Elysium on Time.....(continued from page 1)*

Peter Collinson, receiving imports from colonial forests and swamps, had written to his collector in Philadelphia, John Bartram: "England must be turned up side down & America transplanted Heither."

A conference held at the park in June 2010 celebrated the many milestones since Painshill Park Trust (an independent charitable trust directed by Janie Burford and joined by Teige O'Brien and Mark Ebdon) began, in 1981, the laborious but romantic work of rescuing the overgrown site. Today, the grotto, originally built by Joseph Lane of Tisbury, nears completion as a remarkable set piece of restoration. In a September 15, 2010 article in *Country Life*, Tim Richardson, reviewing Michael Symes's brand-new book *Mr. Hamilton's Elysium: The Gardens of Painshill* (Frances Lincoln Limited, 2010), refers to the grotto as Lane's "best work." The painstaking restoration is certainly "best work." Such methodical and creative work was acknowledged by the award of the 1998 Europa Nostra medal for "exemplary restoration."

Planting restoration, above all, sets Painshill apart from any other project. Charles Hamilton was a great plantsman. Count Karl von Zinzendorf, visiting Painshill in 1768, found it unsurpassed "Premièrement par le choix des arbres" (primarily through the choice of trees). Thomas Whately's account, which Jefferson thought very fine, emphasized the union of the park with the "capital beauties of a garden"; around the Temple of Bacchus, Whately saw "thickets . . . of flowering shrubs." Another visitor, Sir John Parnell, labeled these a "shrubby" in 1769, and he mentioned flowers (fig. 5).

Jefferson used the term "thicket" (rather than "shrubby") when he saw shrubs at Blenheim in "oval raised beds, cultivated, and flowers among the shrubs."

And herein lies a point of dispute. Since the publication of my book *The Flowering of the Landscape Garden* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999) succeeded in reviving interest in flowering shrubs in the landscape garden, the question of "shrubby restoration" has been hotly debated. (Anyone keen on preservation theory and practice will find the latest fervent debates, along with papers by Mavis Batey, Brent Elliott, *et al*, published by Patrick Eyres as the "Painshill conference proceedings," due out in November 2010 in *New Arcadian Journal*.)

In 2005 a living exhibition was opened in the small walled garden at Painshill: "American Roots." Back in 1999, the idea for "American Roots" was born at a conference celebrating the 300th anniversary of the birth of the man who sent American plants to Painshill from Philadelphia—John Bartram. The small idea was to try—even potentially by DNA sequencing—to find wild or cultivated phlox to match those originally grown in landscape gardens like Painshill (a confusing thing, because phlox were then called, for example, "Lychnis, white with the red eye" or by long Latin epithets defining types of "Lychnidea"). Behind this was a desire for horticultural accuracy to match the meticulous reconstruction of the park (fig. 6). The larger project germinated: to re-introduce American plants of known provenance directly from the United States; and to show, by a display, how those plants were acclimatised for eventual placement in the artistic ensemble of the park. Among the suppliers of provenance confirmed species are Woodlanders Nursery, South Carolina, and Ernst Conservation Seeds in Pennsylvania.

The exhibit at Painshill brought to life again all the

*(continued on page 4)*



Figure 2: The Ruined Abbey and Vineyard along the stretch of the lake that was extended towards the end of Charles Hamilton's time at Painshill. The cedars of Lebanon of the Amphitheatre can be seen at the top of the vineyard. June 2010.



Figure 3: The Gothic Tower at the head of the Alpine Valley, part of what Horace Walpole called a "perfect example" of a "kind of alpine scene." Walpole agreed with Jefferson, however, in not being "fond of total plantations of ever-greens." July 2008.



## Painshill: Remaking Elysium on Time.....(continued from page 3)

processes by which Hamilton's "forest seeds" came to be cultivated in England (fig. 7). Charged with mounting the exhibit, Karen Bridgman replicated those processes (though the seconds of e-mail exchange, or plant-dispatch on a seven-hour flight, now replace the weeks and months of communication and box-shipment). One of the surprises of Karen's work is that today's shipments sometimes end up taking just about as long as those a few centuries ago. Mishaps happen now as then.

Adjunct to the conference and the exhibit has been the work of Joel T. Fry of Historic Bartram's Garden in Philadelphia. Since the publication of his seminal studies of the 1783 Bartram catalogue and the history of *Franklinia alatamaha* in cultivation, Joel has greatly enriched the picture of John Bartram's role in plant collecting in colonial North America.

Most pertinent to Karen's research are two studies Joel undertook in 2004/5. The first was a comparison of five records detailing the contents of John Bartram's client boxes (dated from 1744/46 to ca. 1769). These boxes sold for five guineas and contained the seeds of typically just over 100 species of tree and shrub. The second piece of research involved tracing the likely collecting location for each of those over 100 "box" plants. Thus, for example, *Baccharis halimifolia* seems to have been collected in 1741/42 along the southern coast of New Jersey, while *Sorbus americana* was collected in the Catskill Mountains in 1753/54.

A striking upshot of Joel's research is that only about 15% of the more than 150 American species exported by Bartram appear on all five lists (notably dogwood, mountain laurel, and several species of oak). Hence

variations in the standard five-guinea box of 100+ seed types depended on collecting forays and harvesting seed. The fact that *Catalpa bignonioides*, for example, only appears in the ca. 1769 list, yet was grown by Hamilton in the 1750s, underscores two things: first, the role of earlier collectors (notably Mark Catesby); and second, the



Figure 5: The replanted flower and shrubbery beds near the site of the Temple of Bacchus. June 2007.



Figure 6: Phlox paniculata providing mauve blooms within the authentic mixed coloration of a replanted flowerbed near the site of the Temple of Bacchus. June 2007.



Figure 4: The remodeled "Rape of the Sabine Women," which stands near a venerable cork oak (foliage top right) in the Amphitheatre. The plantation of "curious" hollies, juniper, cedars, and many Mediterranean evergreens is home to some specimens of *Magnolia grandiflora*. July 2008.



burgeoning nursery trade. We know, for example, that the Prince of Wales had a 13-foot specimen of *Catalpa* ordered from nurseryman Robert Furber in 1734. Destined for Kent's "new taste in gardening" at Carlton House, this "exotic" must have been Catesby's Carolina *Catalpa*, brought back in 1726. Perhaps Charles Hamilton first saw it in the London garden after he took up his role of Clerk of the Household to the Prince of Wales in 1738.



Figure 7: A display on plant transportation within the small walled garden exhibit. June 2010.

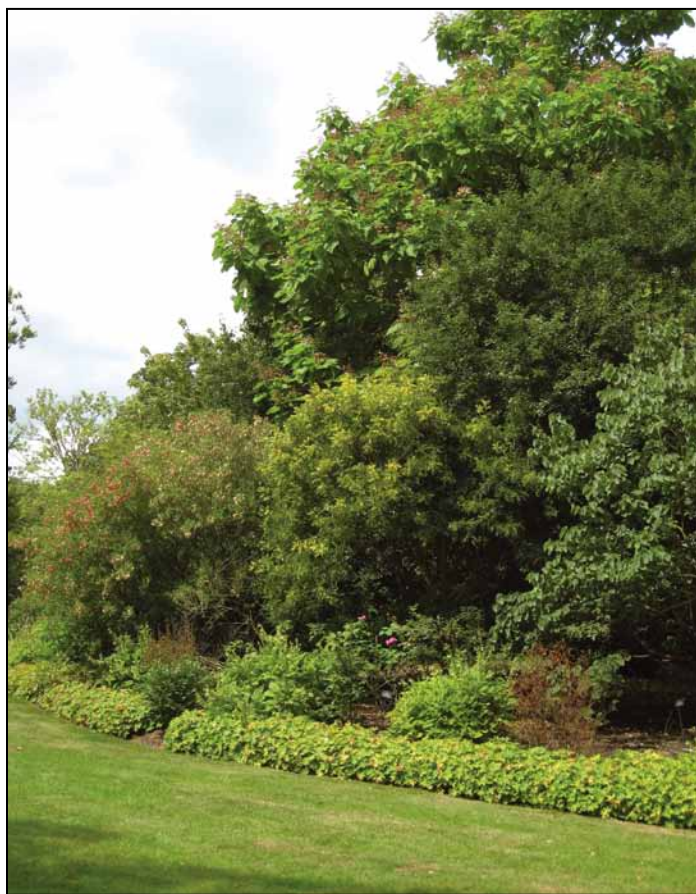


Figure 8: *Catalpa bignonioides* forms the top of the slope of shrubs and trees, replanted as a "theatrical" shrubbery on the "Chinese Bridge Peninsula." The edging is the rabbit-resistant *Geranium macrorrhizum*. July 2009.

The appearance of southern species such as *Catalpa* in the ca. 1769 Bartram list has much to do with John and William Bartram's travels south. For those interested in William Bartram, the new work edited by Thomas Hallock and Nancy E. Hoffman, *William Bartram, The Search for Nature's Design: Selected Art, Letters, and Unpublished Writings* (University of Georgia Press, Athens, 2010) is an important contribution. And for those who simply like the *Catalpa* (and I recall meeting a few at the Monticello symposium in 2002), Painshill has exemplars, including one that graced the top of the shrubbery "theatre" in the Serpentine Walk (fig. 8).

By May 2006, Karen, working with Joint Principal Gardener, Kath Clark, had won "full collection status" for the "John Bartram Heritage Collection" from the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens (now Plant Heritage). It was the first such heritage plant collection in the UK. The two of them took the "Bartram Box" to the Hampton Court Flower Show in 2007, where they were awarded a gold medal. For those from the southern US, the story of the Tipitiwitchet, or Venus' flytrap, is amusingly illustrated by living specimens in our exhibit (fig. 9). As of 2010, the replicated "John Bartram Potting Shed" has become a feature of the updated living display

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Figure 9: *Sarracenia flava* and *S. purpurea* with small specimens of the Venus' flytrap commemorate collecting in the southern US along with botanical representations from Mark Catesby to William Bartram. June 2010.



## *Painshill: Remaking Elysium on Time.....(continued from page 5)*

(fig. 10). The revised exhibit now covers the American connection plus so much more: the nursery trade in London, Hamilton's links with France, and seeds imported from Senegal. The whole history of plant collecting, worldwide, is brought together in the charming Flower Theatre (fig. 11).

And what is being done to replicate the Temple of Bacchus? A few years back, a mock-up was created to demonstrate the impact the reconstructed temple would have in the setting that Sir John Parnell likened to the "Elysian Plains" (fig. 12). Mr. Jefferson, now in the Elysian Fields, might not approve! However, it is just a first step to raising awareness of the importance of properly reconstructing what we should call Jefferson's "top temple of taste." It took Charles Hamilton 35 years to complete his masterpiece, so there are just five years left to reach our target of remaking Elysium on time.



Figure 10: "John Bartram's Potting Shed" in Philadelphia (as a section of Bartram's "Greenhouse") is replicated in the small walled garden to show the packaging of seeds and plants sent Charles Hamilton among others via Peter Collinson. June 2010.

Painshill is located south of London on Portsmouth Road, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1JE. For information on visiting Painshill Park, go to: <http://www.painshill.co.uk/>

[The author is grateful to Mike Gove, who continues directing the restoration and management of Painshill Park, for his help with this article, along with Richard Reay-Smith, Michael Symes, Karen Bridgman, and Kath Clark. ML]

[All photographs for this article by Mark Laird]



Figure 11: The Flower Theatre in the small walled garden displays in a "graduated" manner plants collected from around the globe. Graduation influenced the idea of the "theatrical" shrubbery and flowerbeds. June 2010.



Figure 12: A mock-up of the front of the Temple of Bacchus shows the full potential of the area, which was likened to the "Elysian Plains." June 2007.



# After the Storm, Oakland's Rebirth

Andrew Kohr, ASLA, Atlanta, Georgia  
Board Member, Historic Oakland Foundation

Oakland Cemetery is a 48-acre greenspace in the heart of Atlanta, Georgia. Considered one of the jewels of Atlanta's park system, what started as a solution to Atlanta's burial problem at the edge of town, has become an integral part of the revitalization of the Grant Park, Cabbagetown, and Inman Park neighborhoods east of downtown. Oakland grew from its original six acres to encompass elements of a "rural" cemetery, a popular cemetery style during the 19th century that emphasized large green spaces, which were often located at the edge of cities, and were intended as bucolic alternatives to unsavory, urban burial places. Unlike its private or non-profit counterparts, Oakland Cemetery began and continues to remain a municipal cemetery. With a history that is connected to the Battle of Atlanta, a resting place for many of Atlanta's favorite citizens (including Margaret Mitchell, author of *Gone with the Wind*, and golf champion Bobby Jones), and a burial site for Jews, African-Americans, and transients, Oakland is also a historic site, cultural landscape, and a passive recreational space.

For nearly thirty years, Oakland has been preserved and slowly rehabilitated with the assistance from Historic Oakland Foundation (HOF). Budget cuts, lack of knowledge in preserving historic cemeteries, and rundown neighborhoods all contributed to a poorly maintained site. HOF has worked to restore the cemetery's beauty and, in addition to surrounding revitalized neighborhoods and renewed emphasis by the City of Atlanta, Oakland has been slowly returned to its former glory. All of this was put to the test however on March 14, 2008, when a rare tornado struck the heart of Atlanta and Oakland.

Radar showed the greatest intensity of the tornado occurred as the storm cut a swath through the heart of the cemetery. The initial appearance of Oakland after the storm was shocking. Monuments were damaged, obelisks were toppled, and numerous trees were damaged or lost. For a site that contributed a large amount of its success to its tree canopy, the loss of 100-year old oaks, maples, and magnolias was especially devastating. Amidst the destruction, one of the few bright spots was the cemetery's Bell Tower, which serves as the headquarters for park/HOF staff, and was untouched by the storm. The Bell Tower quickly became the epicenter for damage recovery efforts. HOF staff and city officials worked to determine the most appropriate course of action. The most important first step was to insure Atlantans and park users that the park would be quickly reopened. Numerous organizations contacted Oakland to offer support and advice including the Georgia Historic Preservation Division, The Georgia Trust for

Historic Preservation, Atlanta Urban Design Commission, Atlanta Preservation Center, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Through an arrangement established by State Senator George Hooks, state prisoners worked for weeks to clean a majority of the debris. Because much of the damage occurred on private lots, Federal money could be used to restore the numerous monuments, copings, and retaining walls. HOF's detailed records on past restoration efforts were critical in helping to determine what damage was associated with the tornado, expediting an otherwise laborious process. Three days after the tornado, Georgia Emergency Management (GEMA)





## *After the Storm, Oaklands Rebirth.....(continued from page 7)*

officials were already surveying the site for damage. Volunteers also systematically walked the entire cemetery to recover pieces of granite, marble, and brick, which were then used in restoring individual grave markers. In three short months, the cemetery was reopened to the public. It took another two years to complete all the restoration projects.

Kevin Kuharic, then Director of Restoration for HOF, led the restoration efforts. His seven years of experience as Director were invaluable in ensuring that the appropriate preservation techniques weren't sacrificed for quick resolutions. The final numbers are astonishing. An estimated three million dollars of damage, 150 trees damaged or lost, 70 large truck loads of wood debris, two-and-a-half years of recovery. What is perhaps more amazing is how quickly HOF staff, City of Atlanta officials, FEMA, and local volunteers came together to address the needs of Oakland. More importantly, Historic Oakland Foundation has continued to press forward with its preservation efforts post-tornado. These include updating the overall master plan, developing conceptual plans for the restoration of the greenhouse and two comfort stations and for the construction of a new visitor center, the creation of a Landscape Master Plan, which

will guide the installation of new plants and preservation of existing vegetation in an appropriate manner, and the expansion of outreach efforts through volunteer opportunities, lectures, and enhanced communication efforts such as Facebook and Twitter.

HOF and Oakland Cemetery has become a case study and expert in historic landscape crisis management. While no one can predict when tragedies like this will occur, the Oakland tornado has taught us some valuable lessons:

- An adopted emergency management action plan is a must for any historic site but particularly one that is as legally and physically complex as Oakland.
- Documentation is critical in determining what a site's important human and natural features are and their current condition.
- Detailed record keeping of past treatments and restoration efforts is critical especially as it relates to an evaluation of damages.
- An organizational structure that has excellent leadership is essential in ensuring that restoration efforts are completed, the public understands the cultural value of the landscape that was damaged, and that all stakeholders are engaged in the recovery process.

*[All photographs for this article by Sara Henderson]*

## *“The Absolute South” Baton Rouge welcomes SGHS in April 2011*

*“BATON ROUGE was clothed in flowers, like a bride—no, much more so; like a greenhouse. For we were in the absolute South now—no modifications, no compromises, no half-way measures.” ~Mark Twain, Life on the Mississippi, 1883\**

*By John Sykes, Louisiana State Museum-Baton Rouge*

Mark your calendars and make plans to attend the Southern Garden History Society's 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, April 1-3, 2011, in Baton Rouge. The meeting will be the Society's first visit to the Louisiana State Capitol and a return to Louisiana after annual meetings in St. Francisville (1991) and New Orleans (2004).

The meeting's theme, “River Capitol: Bridging Landscapes of the Old and New South,” introduced an exciting schedule filled with historic gardens, which combine some of the region's Anglo- and Franco-cultural



*Les Chenes Verts (c. 1830), a creole plantation house, Baton Rouge*

*Photo by John Sykes*

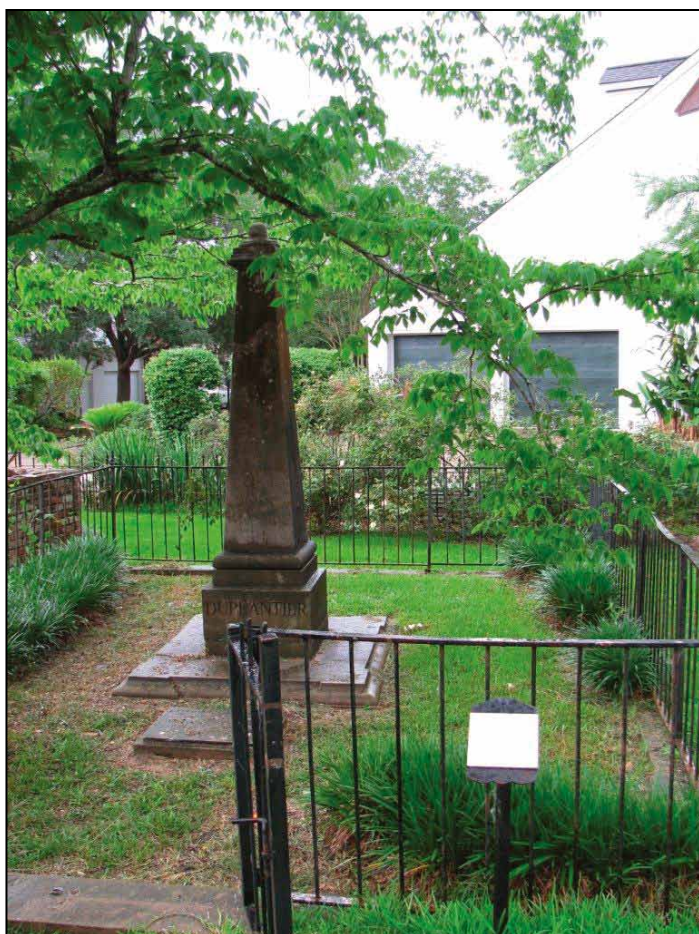


influences. The conference headquarters will be the Hilton Baton Rouge Capitol Center, the restored 1927 Hotel Heidelberg, overlooking the Mississippi River in Downtown Baton Rouge. The hotel, a favorite of Louisiana's legendary Governor and U.S. Senator Huey P. Long (1893-1935), is conveniently located to a variety of interesting downtown museums and landmarks.

Participants will enjoy some of the region's famous cuisine, including a dinner by famed local chef, John Folse. The Louisiana State Museum-Baton Rouge and the LSU Rural Life Museum & Windrush Gardens will serve as hosts during the two-day meeting. The Sunday April 3 optional tour will include a trip to nearby Pointe Coupee Parish, an area rich in its French-Creole traditions with strong cultural links to Baton Rouge. The trip will include several significant plantation landscapes and a variety of private gardens. A special afternoon option will feature landscape designer Michael Hopping's restored home and garden, "Little Texas," on the German Coast in St. James Parish.

Local organizers Marion Drummond, Anne Legett, and John Sykes are determined that there will be no "half-way measures" in welcoming the Society in its first visit to Baton Rouge.

\*From *Life on the Mississippi*, Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1883



Highland Cemetery, Baton Rouge

Photo by John Sykes



Magnolia Mound Plantation and Kitchen, Baton Rouge

Photo by John Sykes



State Capitol, 1932 landscape design by building's architects, Weiss, Dreyfuss & Seifirth

Courtesy of John Sykes

## A Call for Papers

Organizers are calling now for paper proposals on such topics as gardening traditions in the Lower Mississippi River Valley and the South, cultural influences in landscapes, and newly discovered sources in Southern garden history. Paper proposals should include a two-page description of the topic to be presented, and a biographical statement or brief résumé of the speaker. Selected presenters will receive free registration for the meeting. Proposals are due by November 15, 2010, and may be e-mailed to Anne Legett at [wlegett@cox.net](mailto:wlegett@cox.net).



# 2010 Recipients of the Society's Certificate of Merit

In 2009 the Southern Garden History Society board established a **Certificate of Merit** award, which could be presented to a member or non-member, whose work has advanced the mission and goals of the society. The certificate may be for a body of work or for an individual project including, but not limited to, restoration of a garden, leadership in a project relevant to the society's interest, research, or publications. At the annual meeting at Mount Vernon in the spring of 2010 three society members received this award: Weej Broderson, Patti McGee, and Jane Baber White. A fourth member, Margaret Bemiss, was recognized at the fall 2010 board meeting held in Richmond, Virginia.

Janet W. (Weej) Broderson was honored for her pioneering and unwavering efforts in the landscape restoration and preservation of Goodwood Museum and Gardens, Inc., located in Tallahassee, Florida, beginning in the 1980s and continuing today.

Evelyn (Patti) McGee of Charleston, South Carolina, was awarded for her lifelong dedication to historic gardens and landscape preservation, and, specifically for her passionate efforts to preserve the Elizabeth Lawrence garden in Charlotte, North Carolina. Patti continues to play a major role in coordinating support and partnerships

with our society, the Garden Conservancy, and nearby Wing Haven Gardens and Bird Sanctuary in Charlotte.

Jane Baber White was recognized for her groundbreaking work in creating *The Book of Attributes for the Living Horticultural Collections of the Old City Cemetery Museums and Arboretum of Lynchburg, Virginia*. Mrs. White, now director emeritus of the Old City Cemetery, devoted twenty-five years toward developing and nurturing a truly unique historic landscape.

Margaret Page Bemiss was awarded the Certificate of Merit at the fall board meeting dinner on September 24. Mrs. Bemiss, who, as a member of the Restoration Committee of the Garden Club of Virginia, has played a significant role in fostering serious scholarship and professionalism in the field of garden and landscape history research, was expressly commended for her recently published book, *Historic Virginia Gardens: Preservation Work of the Garden Club of Virginia, 1975-2007*.

Nomination for Certificates of Merit should be sent to the society President and should include a cover letter and supporting documentation. Awarding of certificates will be approved by the Board of Directors and will usually be announced at the annual meeting.

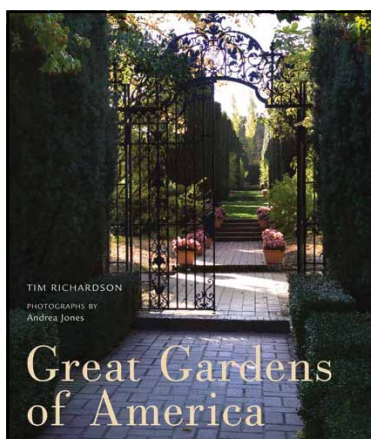
## Book Reviews

By Davyd Foard Hood, Book Review Editor

***Great Gardens of America***, by Tim Richardson, photographs by Andrea Jones, Frances Lincoln Publishers, hardcover, 2009; ISBN: 9-780-7112-2886-3; list price \$50.

Carrying an encyclopedic title and having a coffee-table book format, *Great Gardens of America* might be mistaken, on first notice, as a conventional book with too many, too-bright color photographs of over-published gardens accompanied by thin text. It is, in fact, none of the above.

Instead, *Great Gardens of America* is an exceptional appreciation of twenty-five gardens recorded by a talented writer and a sympathetic photographer. Tim Richardson (born 1968), the London-based garden writer, critic, and



historian, has a sure sense of landscape design, a critical knowledge of gardens that were important in the past and retain their character and presence, and those made over the course of recent decades that have quickly garnered iconic status. Andrea Jones, likewise, is an internationally-acclaimed garden photographer, who is published in books, magazines, and the London *Daily Telegraph*, and has the monograph *Plantworlds* to her credit. The work of both appears in the leading garden journals in the UK and the US, including *Gardens Illustrated*.

The twenty-five "Great" gardens represent a near-even balance between classic American gardens, long-acknowledged as historic, and modern landscapes, mostly cultivated since 1950 and some dating as recently as 2000 and 2004. Not surprisingly, the four Southern gardens appearing here, Dumbarton Oaks, Middleton Place, Monticello, and Vizcaya are in the first category. Among these, Vizcaya has too long been the object of ignorant snobbery, and I, among many others, welcome this learned, scholarly appraisal that gives it due place. Naumkeag, Stan Hywet, Les Quatre Vents—one of two Canadian gardens, Innisfree, Chanticleer, Longwood, Filoli, the fabulous cactus-planted gardens of Lotusland,



and the Huntington Botanical Gardens complete the roster of historic gardens.

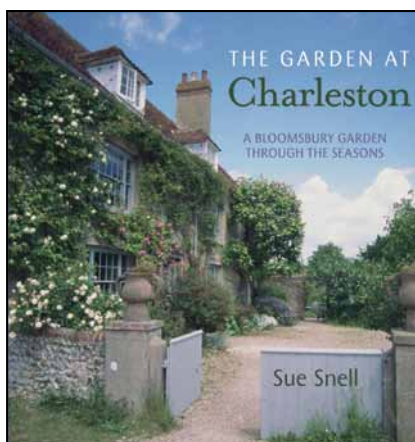
Readers will also know many of the modern gardens chosen by Tim Richardson including Dan Kiley's work at the Miller Garden at Columbus, Indiana, his own Windcliff, the Oehme Van Sweden garden for the Rifkins at Amagansett, and Jack Lenor Larson's LongHouse Reserve where sculpture is as important as plant material on grounds in which it is at ease. But as well as readers know any of the twenty-five gardens, they will find Tim Richardson's accounts of each enlightening, entertaining, and refreshingly welcome. He eschews conventional descriptions and offers, in each instance, short essays that reflect equally his skills as a critic and historian. In short, he crafts the case for each of these gardens—and their greatness—qualities that Andrea Jones conveys in like measure in her photographs.



***The Garden at Charleston: A Bloomsbury Garden through the Seasons***, by Sue Snell, Frances Lincoln Publishers; hardcover, 2010; 112 pages; ISBN13: 978-0711231122; list price: \$25.

Charleston, the country house in the Sussex Downs that became home in 1916 to Vanessa Bell, her lover Duncan Grant, his lover David Garnett, and her sons Julian and Quentin, has long held interest for its association with the Bloomsbury circle and its role as a place of retreat and refuge for an extended family of their friends and kinsmen. The house and its grounds had immediate appeal and potential. It would also offer sanctuary and agricultural employment to Duncan Grant and David Garnett, both of whom were conscientious objectors to war service.

Virginia Woolf described Charleston to her sister in a letter on 14 May 1916, written after her husband Leonard Woolf had inspected the property. The Woolfs then had a summer house at Asheham, located some four miles from Charleston.



"I wish you'd leave Wissett, and take Charleston. Leonard went over it, and says it's a most delightful house and strongly advises you to take it. It is about a mile from Firle, on that little path which leads under the downs. It has a charming garden, with a pond, and fruit trees, and vegetables, all now rather run wild, but you could make it lovely. The house is very nice, with large rooms, and one room with big windows fit for a studio. At present it is used apparently as a weekend place, . . . . They say it only takes half an hour to walk to Glynde Station, through the Park, and you have Firle, with its telephone, quite near, so you would be more accessible than we are. There is a w. c. and a bathroom, but the bath only has cold water. The house wants doing up—and the wallpapers are awful. But it sounds a most attractive place—and 4 miles from us, so you wouldn't be badgered by us."

Vanessa Bell took Charleston and the property flourished. She and Duncan Grant were both talented artists, and at Charleston they painted pictures on canvas, paintings that were given to friends, exhibited, and sold, and others that remained in the place of their making. In the rooms of Charleston, they also painted its doors and cupboards, tables, chairs, and dressers. Its interior decoration embodied a love of color and the artistry of two painters who made a home at Charleston unlike any other in Britain. While they also had studios and lodgings in London and a house at Cassis, it was to Charleston that they both returned again and again, and stayed during the last years of their lives. Vanessa Bell died at Charleston in 1961, and the house remained home to Duncan Grant until his death in 1978. In 1981 the Charleston Trust was established to restore the house and renew its gardens, a project that was generously supported by Lila Acheson Wallace. Today the house and gardens at Charleston are open for visit from April to October.

*The Garden at Charleston* is a photographic album of its gardens, fields, flowers, paths, and features, all images taken season after season by a single photographer over the course of some fifteen years. In her short introduction Sue Snell recalls her first visit to Charleston in 1986. Fortune and friendship brought her back in 1995 when she undertook a special assignment to photograph the garden through the seasons. Those photographs were the subject of an exhibition, "A Garden's Year 1995-1996." That experience, in turn, was the genesis of a longer commitment to the gardens of "sweet disorder" seen here in spring, summer, fall, and the near black-and-white beauty of winter.





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 2009-2010 year. Membership categories:

<b>Benefactor</b>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Patron</b>	<b>\$250</b>
<b>Sustainer</b>	<b>\$100</b>
<b>Institution or Business</b>	<b>\$75</b>
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<b>Individual</b>	<b>\$30</b>
<b>Student</b>	<b>\$15</b>

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*Deadline for submitting articles for the Winter issue of Magnolia is November 22, 2010.*

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