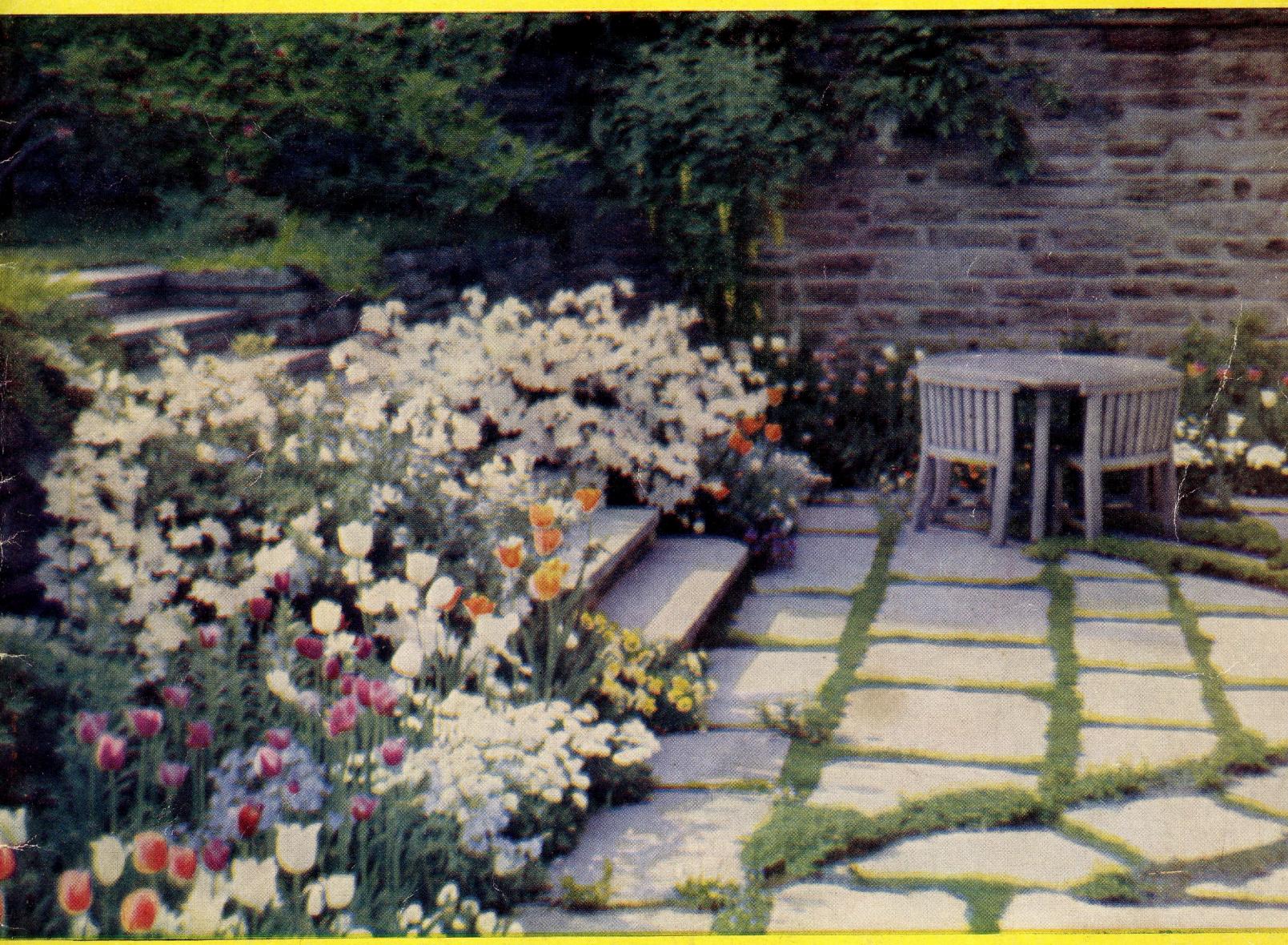


*Philadelphia*

# FLOWER SHOW



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNE B. WERTSNER, PENNSYLVANIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY, COURTESY WOMAN'S HOME COMPANION GARDEN BOOK

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# *Where East Meets West*

By HENRY SKINNER

THE HORTICULTURAL heritage of Philadelphia is perhaps unequaled by any city in the United States. Philadelphia had the first botanic garden, its botanists have been renowned the world over and today it has fine gardens, small and large, and a people who appreciate them.

One such garden had its beginning in about the year 1890 at the summer home of a member of an old Philadelphia family, John T. Morris, in Chestnut Hill. Both Mr. Morris and his sister were ardent plant lovers, and through forty years they assembled on this estate of "Compton" trees, shrubs and plants of all descriptions from the far corners of the world. From Pekin and Yokohama, from England, France, Italy and Central America they came. Rarities were received from the famous Arnold Arboretum in Boston, products of the oriental expeditions of Professor C. S. Sargent, "Chinese" Wilson and others—and to all were added exotics from American nurseries and a host of the finest natives of the United States and Canada.

Surviving her brother by seventeen years, Miss Lydia Morris died in 1932. Through the generosity of these two devoted horticulturists, the estate of Compton became the Morris Arboretum of the Uni-

versity of Pennsylvania. As an arboretum it has thus become an outdoor museum where folk from all walks of life can enjoy this wealth of plants at any time; where nature study and the lore of living things will this year alone be taught to school children, scouts and brownies, numbering in the thousands; where university students study botany and where research is in progress on numerous phases of plant growth and culture. But above all this remains a garden in which Philadelphians can find relaxation in the quiet of old trees or amid the fragrance of roses on a June hillside, where bordered lawns slope down to sparkling brooks, where the spell of the orient is entwined in the sweeping branches of a Dragons-eye Pine above an old pagoda, or where wooded cliffs are reflected in placid stretches of the winding Wissahickon.

There is scarcely any one "best" time to visit this garden in Chestnut Hill for there is no month of the year when beauty and interest cannot readily be found. If flowers are the main attraction, Spring is of course the blossom season. From the opening of the first daffodils and the Star Magnolia in early April the changing color pattern of a host of woody plants builds to a climax from mid-May to early June. Cherries, Magnolias, Forsythias and early Azaleas



*Joint Exhibit of Morris Arboretum and Scott Horticultural Foundation*



from the Far East strike the first strong chords. But these have scarcely faded when the pattern is already interwoven with the creamy candles of native Buckeyes, the snowy bells of the southern Halesias, the white crosses of Pennsylvania Dogwood, with Persian and French Lilacs, with the whites of Spiraea and Viburnum and on through Crabapple time in May to the high brilliance of mid-season Azaleas and Rhododendrons. A special feature is the rock wall surrounding the Rose Garden. In early May this wall becomes a color tone cascade from the hundreds of rock and alpine plants finding anchorage between its stones. The roses, in formal arrangement, attain their color height in June, and again in Fall if frosts are not too early.

Summer is the time for foliage, for deepening greens and restful shadows, yet in abated measure the flower show continues. The yellows of Varnish and Japanese Pagoda trees, the million candles of the Dwarf Horse-chestnut, Spiraeas, Hydrangeas and many more lead on by degrees to the later blossoms of Rose of Sharon, Chaste Shrub, the Virginbower Clematis, Bluebeard, and last of all, the native Witch-hazel. But with the passing season interest shifts from flowers to the glistening fruits which are now everywhere in abundance until, as sunny days are succeeded by the first cold nights, the coloring of the great Sour Gums near the rose garden comes as a crimson signal and the whole landscape bursts suddenly into a glory of color which even Spring can scarcely excel.

It is perhaps in winter that the evergreens come most into their own. It is then that the Yews, Boxwoods and berry-decked Hollies, the Pines, Spruces, Firs, the true Cedars from Kashmir, Africa and Lebanon with their upright egg-shaped cones; the small but thriving specimen of a Giant Redwood and a host of other conifers afford endless interest of line, color, history and behavior. If the weather is cool a warming welcome awaits in the one of several greenhouses which with its stream and grottoes, displays an indoor world of tropical ferns, a never failing attraction especially to the younger generation of visitors.

These are the scenes with which visitors become most familiar. It is more in the background of the garden or arboretum, in the greenhouses, laboratories, offices and herbarium that evidence of other kinds of activities is found. Thousands of potted seedlings now in the greenhouses are the young hopefulls of a program of plant improvement by selection and hybridization; powdery coal in pots and beds is associated with a tree repopulation project in the Pennsylvania coal barren region; strange hieroglyphics attached to trees throughout the grounds are linked with the testing of new chemicals for the control of pests and diseases, just as dozens of white bags on the taller trees in summer time are evidence of

the very long time project in breeding for improvement of tree types which is sponsored by the U. S. Forest Service through the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station. All this and more. Reports of such projects appear from time to time in the *Bulletin* which is published by the Associates, a group of supporting friends of the Arboretum.

An herbarium for the identification of woody plants is housed in the Administration Building, together with a branch of the University Library which is available for public reference at any time during office hours.

For those who are so fortunate as to possess a car, the Morris Arboretum is readily approached by way of Germantown Avenue or the Bethlehem Pike. It is bounded on its three sides toward Philadelphia by Germantown, Hillcrest and Stenton Avenues, with one gate on Hillcrest and another on Meadowbrook Lane, one block off Stenton Avenue. By public transportation one may choose between the Broad Street Subway to Olney Avenue and the "L" bus to Hillcrest Avenue, the No. 23 trolley on Germantown Avenue or the Reading or Pennsylvania Railroads to Chestnut Hill, transferring in each case to the "L" or Erdenheim bus in Chestnut Hill for the 4-minute ride to Hillcrest Avenue. Visitors are welcomed every day of the week, including Sunday, between the hours of nine A.M. and five P.M. Admission is free.

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