



# EDEN



California Garden and Landscape History Society Journal

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## SAVING VAL VERDE — THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

Val Verde was originally named Dias Felices (Happy Days). Designed by Bertram Goodhue for Henry Dater in 1918, the house is an early effort to find an appropriate architecture for the West coast. The garden (now 17 acres, once 25) was done in somewhat conventional, Beaux Arts style with contributions by both Goodhue and landscape architect Charles Gibbs Adams. Goodhue also designed the adjacent Gillespie estate, El Fureidis, for Dater's cousin, J. Waldron Gillespie. (In Persian style with a famous *allée* of cypress and a palm collection, this, even earlier estate is now altered — some would say ruined.) The two cousins carried out horticultural experiments in the early years of the century. Some of their original plantings survive at Val Verde.

C. H. Ludington purchased Dias Felices in 1925, renamed it Val Verde, hired landscape architect Lockwood de Forest, and died shortly thereafter, leaving the estate to his son, Wright Ludington, a prominent patron of the arts. Lockwood de Forest, a childhood friend of Wright's, continued his work at Val Verde for years. He remodeled both the buildings and the gardens, and added the wonderful atrium art gallery (now a separate residence). In *California Gardens: Creating a New Eden*, David Streatfield wrote that de Forest resolved the problems with Goodhue's design in "an appropriate and powerful way that displays great poetic insight."

Robin Karson, director of the Library of American Landscape History, wrote to the Santa Barbara Planning Commission that Val Verde is "a resource beyond measure for students of American landscape history.

Few estates of this size or quality have survived anywhere in the country. This is one of the best, in superb condition." The authors of *The Golden Age of American Gardens* call Lockwood de Forest's colonnade at Val Verde a "real stroke of genius."

Dr. Warren Austin, owner of Val Verde for 50 years, wants to donate the estate and a multi-million dollar endowment to maintain it as a gift to the people of Santa Barbara in honor of his late wife, Bunny Austin. However, because it is in a residential area, he needs to obtain a conditional use permit (CUP). Many neighbors argued against the gift in a rather typical NIMBY fashion because they believed it would increase traffic (Lotusland, a school, and a college are also nearby). The Environmental Impact Report concluded that there would be no Class I impacts and all Class II impacts can be mitigated because the number of visitors to be allowed and hours of operation are so restricted.

On November 25, 1998, the Planning Commission voted three to two in favor of Dr. Austin's CUP. The attorney for the opposition is appealing the vote to the Board of Supervisors of Santa Barbara county. So the story is not over, and Val Verde's conversion to a garden

museum is still not assured at this writing.

—Susan Chamberlin



[Ed. note: If any member wishes to write in support of Val Verde, they may address letters to the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, 105 East Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101. It is important to emphasize that Val Verde is historically significant on both a National and State level.]



## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Members,

As of this writing, your Board of Directors will assemble on the weekend of February 26–28 at Santa Barbara in conjunction with a regional meeting to encourage new members, hosted by Publicity Chair Susan Chamberlin and Vice President Laurie Hannah, at Santa Barbara Botanical Garden (*see Coming Events*).

Recently, the Board was asked to join with the Garden Conservancy and numerous local Santa Barbara organizations, (S.B. chapter of the AIA, S.B. Horticultural Society, S.B. Historical Society, etc.), in supporting the conversion of the Val Verde estate to a limited-access museum. In our list of Aims and Purposes, we declare it our purpose to identify, document, restore and *preserve* gardens and landscapes depicting California's culture and history. Board Members were polled and we voted to add our voice in support of the project.

In preparation for our upcoming Board Meeting, I solicit your ideas on matters for the Board to discuss. Our major concern at this time is to assist Mary Morrissey in planning the August 1999 Annual Meeting at Rancho Los Alamitos. Among other things, she needs suggestions for gardens to visit in the area. Rancho Los Cerritos will certainly be one. Are there others you can recommend?

We will also be considering proposals for hosting future annual meetings. If you have ideas for a location and want help finding nearby members to assist you, please write to me.

It came to my attention that Betsy Fryberger, one of our Founding Members and a Curator at the Stanford Museum, was preparing an exhibition entitled *Viewing The Changing Garden* to be shown in the summer and early fall of 2001. The exhibition will include more than one hundred prints, drawings, books, photographs, and paintings, ranging in date from the sixteenth century to today, showing historic gardens and their subsequent modification or destruction. The show is tentatively scheduled for July 5 through September 16, 2001. It is my hope that we can schedule our annual meeting for that year to coincide with the last week or so of the exhibit. I am already lining up local members to assist with organizing the meeting.

With the 1999 meeting being held in Long Beach, and a proposal for the 2001 meeting for Northern California, we thought it might be suitable to hold the 2000 meeting approximately midway between the North and South regions, possibly centered on the horticulture department at UC–San Luis Obispo. Are there any other suggestions?

Once again, I request that you send me notice of any issues you wish to put before the Board for discussion. We want this organization to reflect the concerns of our entire membership and we need your input.

—Mitzi VanSant, President

The Garden Conservancy, now eight years old, represents a national manifestation of the growing desire to preserve our garden heritage...One of our dreams is an archive of private gardens worthy of preservation in North America, so that important ones can be identified and their owners can begin to think about the prospect of preserving their gardens for posterity.

—Frank Cabot, founder of the Conservancy, *Pacific Horticulture*, Spring, 1998.

## CATALOG OF LANDSCAPE RECORDS — UPDATE ON THE UPDATE

Ok, so where are the threatened "homework" assignments? First, the Editor was slow to acquire a copy of the *Directory of California Historical Organizations, Agencies and Museums* which was to be used in determining the assignments for each member. And it is taking a bit longer to match places to people than we first thought it would. Also, if there is so much reluctance on the part of the membership to participate in this project, maybe we need to rethink our approach altogether. So this will become an item on the Board agenda for now and we'll discuss it again with the membership at a later date.

In the meantime, any members who'd like to order their own copy of the *Directory* may do so by sending a check made out to CCPH in the amount of \$14 (includes shipping costs) to California Council for the Promotion of History, P.O. Box 221475, Sacramento, CA 95822.

The current *Directory* was issued in 1991. It is divided by counties, and lists organizations, agencies and museums relating to California history. It also indicates which groups have archives of some sort. Work is in progress on a new issue, so if you note any omissions from the current *Directory*, please send the information to the Council. We've already asked them to include CGLHS.

## DUES DUE???

Please check the date on your *Eden* newsletter label. Renewal dates are quarterly, relative to when you joined up. **If there is a big red star on your label and it shows 12/98 and it says "RENEWAL FORM ENCLOSED" next to your label and there is a colorful renewal form enclosed with your newsletter, your dues are due now.** We want you to continue as a member of CG&LHS so please send your check for \$20.00 to Barbara Barton, Membership Secretary, Box 1338, Sebastopol, CA 95473.



## RANCHO LOS ALAMITOS

*[The following article is composed of excerpts from: an article written by Rancho Executive Director, Pamela Seager about the Restoration of the Rose Garden at Rancho Los Alamitos – “An Oasis on the Land: The Personal Gardens of Florence Bixby”; two Los Alamitos brochures; and an article written by Jane Brown Gillette (“The Name of the Rose”) for Landscape Architecture, 6/97. Thanks to Mary Morrissey for providing a copy of the latter.]*

The land encompassing Rancho Los Alamitos was originally inhabited by Native Americans (circa 500 AD). As with most other areas of California, the land was taken over first by the Spaniards. Manuel Nieto, a Spanish foot soldier, received the area as part of a 300,000-acre land grant in 1790. His heirs divided the property into five great ranchos, one of which became the 28,500 acre Rancho Los Alamitos. The Ranch of the Little Cottonwoods was sold to Governor Jose Figueroa in 1834. Don Abel Stearns owned the property from 1842 until 1866, when losses due to drought forced foreclosure of the property. In 1878, John Bixby leased Los Alamitos and moved his young family into the deteriorated adobe.

Susan and John refurbished the adobe and began to develop their land. Building upon the remains of the 1840s plantings of Don Abel, Susan Bixby developed what is now known as the Old Garden, established the framework of pepper trees still evident today, and planted the two Moreton Bay Fig trees that dominate the front lawn. By 1881, in partnership with Jotham Bixby and I. W. Hellman, John Bixby was able to buy the property.

Then John Bixby died in 1887. His young widow leased the ranch property and took her children to northern California. In 1898, her son Fred married Florence Elizabeth Green of Piedmont. They had been fellow students at the University of California at Berkeley. At this point, the family all moved back to the Rancho, and initially Fred and Florence shared the ranch house with Susan.

“My sense,” says David Streatfield, professor of landscape architecture at the University of Washington, and author of the historical narrative that is the basis for the 1987 *Garden Restoration and Landscape Maintenance Plan* for Rancho Los Alamitos, “is that almost certainly when Florence arrived at Rancho Los

Alamitos as a young bride she was appalled at what she found. It was so different from the Bay Area.”

After a time, the newly-weds settled into a house on the bluff above the ocean some eight miles from the ranch. Fred had taken over management of the Rancho in 1898, and commuted back and forth for several years. Eventually, the bluff house was moved to the current site of the Rancho tennis court, where it remained until the early teens.

Susan Bixby died in 1905, leaving Fred and his sister the property, then some 7,200 acres, and, as Streatfield points out, “all sorts of changes occur as soon as she’s gone.” Fred and Florence move into the house; “they add more skylights, and later they open up the drawing room to the Old Garden, using that as a place for entertaining and dancing.”

Following Susan’s death, Florence Bixby began to structure the gardens as we see them today — four acres divided into a series of thematic areas. Working with a number of prominent landscape designers and plantsmen of the period, Florence built successive garden areas as funds and opportunities to develop the farm landscape became available.

The designers were impressive — Paul J. Howard of Santa Barbara, (who designed the Back Patio in 1921), Florence Yoch of Pasadena, and most notably in the South Gardens, the Olmsted Brothers firm of Brookline, Massachusetts. From the firm’s western office in southern California J. Frederick Dawson served as project manager and Hammon Sadler executed the

drawings. But, says Streatfield, “With all the designers who worked here, Florence was very much in charge.”

Florence started with the gardens encircling the house. Later, to satisfy her diverse interests in ornamental horticulture, she created a series of gardens below the drive, including a Cactus Garden and a California Native Garden, where the Bixbys entertained their Mexican ranch hands on Sunday afternoons.

The period 1890–1930 can truly be seen as the golden era of horticultural experimentation in Southern California. Supported by revenues from enterprises such as land development, oil and the movie industry, great estates and gardens appeared on the landscape. In this period of conspicuous flamboyance, the gardens of Rancho Los Alamitos stand apart for their singular sensitivity and restraint. They are unpretentious “ranch gardens” and provide a cool, green envelope around the





house, as well as intimate spaces for entertaining by a fun-loving family and their friends.

"What makes the garden interesting to me," says Streatfield, "is that it expresses a lonely woman in a strange, unfamiliar landscape — physical, social, and cultural — who really came to terms with it in a creative way. The garden has to be seen as a creative act on her part, both as expressing her own inherent artistic abilities and also as a way of coming to terms with that landscape." It also seems significant that Florence kept these gardens herself with the aid of a ranch hand or two; she did not have a formal garden staff or a garden manager like many of her contemporaries.

In her gardens Florence not only accepted but celebrated the ranch. "It's not a garden that in a conventional sense one would think of as one of the great gardens, and by that I mean something that exhibits great design in an obvious way," says Streatfield. "But in a very unpretentious way it speaks powerfully of Florence Bixby's understanding of the history of one of the major ranches — and the site of the oldest adobe house [circa 1800] — in southern California."

The first step in Florence Bixby's development of the outer South Gardens was to create a formal walk below the line of pepper trees at the edge of the driveway. In the early 1920s the children's animal hutches and playhouse were replaced by an elegant walk and a gazebo with sweeping views across the fields to the Pacific Ocean, with Catalina Island shimmering on the horizon. This Geranium Walk and gazebo are attributed to Florence Yoch, one of Southern California's preeminent landscape architects of the 1920s and 1930s.

In 1926, Fred and Florence took a trip to Europe and the following year, Mrs. Bixby turned to the nationally known Olmsted Brothers firm to create a number of Italian "souvenir" touches in the gardens. The Olmsteds provided the design for a Rose Garden, Lower Patio, Oleander Walk, Cypress Steps and Patio, and a Flower Cutting Garden. The initial Olmsted plan was clearly too elaborate for Mrs. Bixby's taste and cor-

respondence between client and designer reveal her constant suggestions to simplify the plan to create gardens in harmony with the low-key, understated elegance of the ranch house.

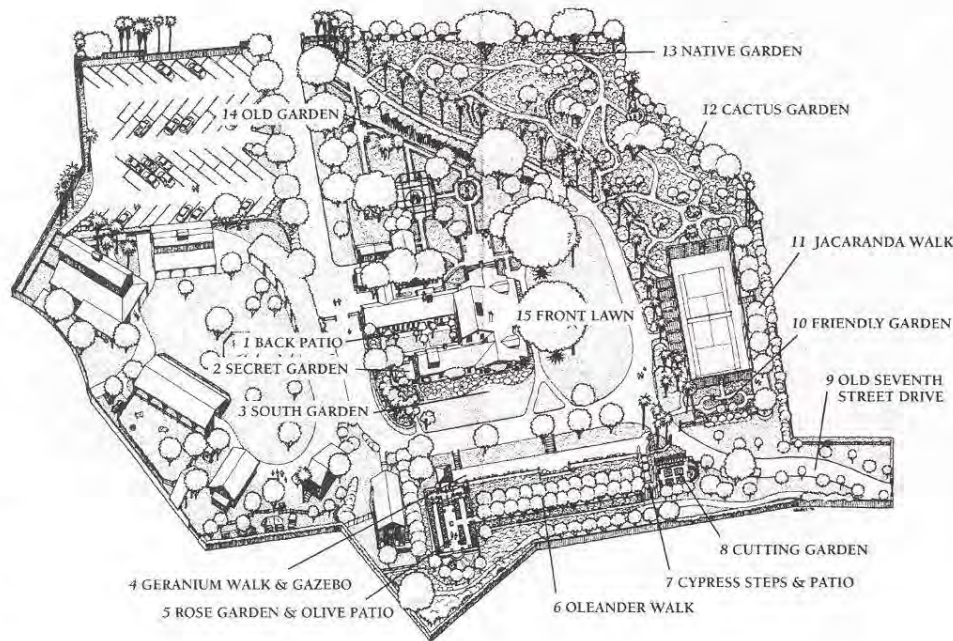
By the late 1920s, the rapid development of Long Beach, the extension of Seventh Street and the proliferation of oil wells began to destroy the view to the south. The long vistas were gradually screened off and the garden turned in upon itself, becoming a place of refuge behind a dense enclosure of foliage. A 1936 aerial photograph shows Rancho Los Alamitos surrounded by a sea of fields. Today the remaining 7.5 acres of this once great property are wrapped around by a multitude of red-tiled roofs that stretch to the horizon.

Fred Bixby died in 1952, and in 1953 Florence suffered a stroke. From that time until her death almost a decade later the gardens were cared for by a devoted companion/housekeeper with occasional help from ranch hands. Between 1963 and 1968 the family directed a major effort to prepare the then neglected garden for its new role. In 1968 the property was given to the City of Long Beach to be maintained as a public historic site. Over the years, declining public funds and the accelerating needs of an aging property dictated a new approach. A committee determined that the solution was

a public/private partnership, and in 1986 Pamela Seager came from eleven years at the California Historical Society to serve as the executive director.

The Rancho Los Alamitos Foundation was fortunate to receive a significant grant from the State Office of Historic Preservation for restoration of the South Gardens, includ-

ing the Rose Garden. The restoration is based on thorough research and the concept that as much of the original historic material must be preserved as possible. The final result is not an attempt to return the garden to its form in 1928, when it was originally built. Rather, it is a blending of the original design and the changes that have happened over time as the Bixby family used their garden and enjoyed its evolving maturity. While respecting the maturity of the garden setting today, the time





period for interpretation of the Rose Garden is generally 1828–1948, when the garden was most actively managed by Florence Bixby.

The restoration of the South Garden evolved in two phases. The first phase emanated from the Master Plan where the research was based on an extensive collection of photographs, family films, and rehabilitation plans from 1968 when the garden was prepared to pass from private into public hands. No plans or plant lists were known to exist from the family period. Even the designer for the lower South Gardens was not known, although they were generally attributed to Florence Yoch.

When bringing together the initial collection of historic roses, nursery catalogs, garden books, and magazines were examined. Consulting garden historian David Streatfield and Russell Beatty, a former professor of landscape architecture at UC Berkeley, conducted considerable research, particularly comparing Mrs. Bixby's rose garden with others of the region and historical period. Research questions were directed to specialty growers, rosarians, and expert advisors with regard to the selection of period plantings. A list of "first choice" historic roses was generated and the Rose Collection began to be developed.

It was assumed that Mrs. Bixby's roses were likely to have been old favorites from the late 1880s through the early 1930s — such as 'Cécile Brunner' (1894), 'Lady Hillingdon' (1910), 'Mme. Jules Bouché' (1911), and 'President Herbert Hoover' (1929). After searching the ever-increasing number of suppliers and growers of heirloom roses, it was clear that a number of the first choices were readily available. When roses were not available from commercial sources, an ambitious propagation effort began. If no historic rose was available, then garden Curator, Janet Becker, selected interim modern alternates. With generous assistance from Clair Martin, Sharon Van Enoo, and Kim Rupert, budwood cuttings were taken from roses at the Huntington for propagation by rooted cuttings and/or bud grafting. Mr. Ralph Moore of Sequoia Nursery in Visalia grafted numerous historic rose selections. Charlie Hecker and Tom Carruth of Weeks Wholesale Roses propagated and budded the remaining hybrid tea standards or tree roses.

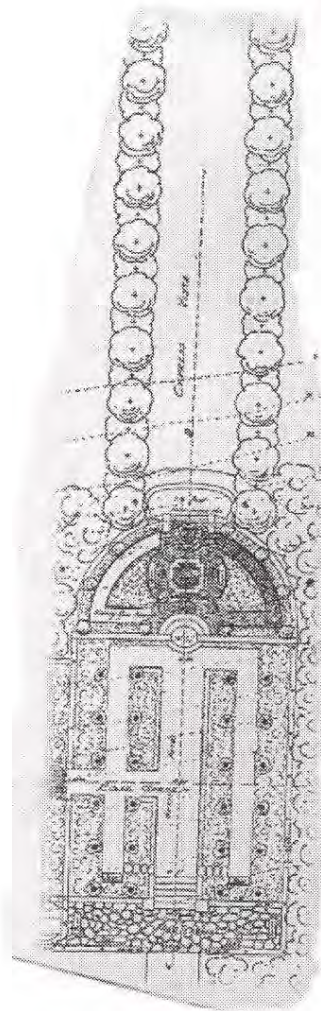
The second phase of the restoration of the garden came almost at the moment when bid documents were in the final stages of preparation. The Rose Garden and South Gardens had been excavated and their original irrigation, drainage systems, and paving documented so that the consulting landscape architects, Katzmaier, Newal, Kehr of Corona del Mar, could work from an accurate base of historical information when drawing plans and specifications for contemporary functional systems.

Then chance intervened. In 1992 Rancho Los Alamitos was a stop on a tour given at the annual meeting of the California Preservation Society. Olmsted scholar Noël Dorsey Vernon, now an associate dean of the College of Environmental Design at California State Polytechnic University at Pomona, was on the tour, and

while she had never seen the name of Rancho Los Alamitos connected to the Olmsteds, she was pretty certain that she *had* seen the name of Mrs. Fred Bixby. A subsequent call to the Library of Congress with the number of a file provided by Vernon confirmed the existence of correspondence between Florence Bixby and the Olmsted firm. Then, in a search at the library of the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site at Brookline, Massachusetts, Becker discovered the Olmsted drawings for the gardens, including a planting plan for the Rose Garden.

Streatfield and Beatty were called in to compare the Olmsted plans to the existing garden and the proposed restoration plans. In-depth comparisons were made between the Olmsted plans of 1927 and the 1928 photos, and to determine proposed design versus the garden as it was actually installed. A determination was made to adjust the restoration plans and, particularly, the selection of roses to begin to duplicate the Olmsted planting plan.

What then is the purpose of substituting the Olmsted roses — no easy undertaking? Mary Morrissey, a volunteer at the Rancho since 1992 and now curator





of the garden, is quite definite: "The value is historical accuracy. We know that Mrs. Bixby didn't follow everything they suggested to the letter. She had her own ideas about certain things. But it's the only listing of roses that we have that she worked with. Apparently there are none of her private garden notes anywhere. We don't have any purchase orders for plants — which is unusual because most of the farm records are meticulous. And so we feel that even if she didn't follow it to the letter we'd like to strive to re-create the Olmsted plan because we know that they did present it to her and she worked off of it."

One distinct difference from the proposed restoration plans was that the Olmsted plan called for closely planted beds designed with large blocks of colors radiating outward from a central sundial. Although less varieties were shown in the Olmsted plan, the overall number of roses required in the restoration greatly increased.

The schedule for the restoration program precluded assembling a complete new collection to replicate exactly the roses detailed on the Olmsted Plan, therefore, available historic roses of similar type and color were utilized. Over time, these roses have been replaced with the same varieties as shown on the original plans if they could be found. Sources for the following five roses have remained elusive: 'Lady Ashtown' (1904); 'Francis Scot Key' (1913); 'Golden Emblem' (1917) [*the original was an Irish rose from McGredy — the name was recycled for use by Jackson & Perkins on a different hybrid tea in 1987*]; 'Jonkheer J.L. Mock' (1910) [*only the climbing form is currently available*]; and 'Duchess of Wellington' (1909).

In several instances, the restoration has deferred to what Florence Bixby actually chose from the Olmsted plan, if evidence of her choice exists in the photographs, in an extraordinary 1948 family film (in color), or in the garden itself. For example, the photographs reveal two 'Mme Caroline Testout' (1890) soft pink hybrid teas on the north end of the paths; these have now been added. Two climbing 'Maman Cochet' (1909) roses and one 'Climbing La France' (1893) listed in the Olmsted plan have not been used because they are not found in the photographs. Nor have four 'Belle Siebrecht' roses [*aka 'Mrs. W. J. Grant' (1895)*] from the Olmsted plan been installed because the designated location of one is currently filled by a mature 'Yellow Lady Banks' [*Rosa banksiae lutea (1824)*] that has clearly survived from Mrs. Bixby's era. Photographic evidence suggests that the other three roses in this spot were also 'Yellow Lady Banks'.

By far the most interesting deviation from the Olmsted plan is Florence's choice of the four 'Climbing Talisman' (1930) roses, the golden yellow and copper climbers that greet the visitor at the entrance from the Oleander Walk and form the beginning and ending of the tunnel-of-gold color scheme. The Olmsted plan called for four 'Gold of Ophir' roses, [*'Fortune's Double Yellow' (1845)*], which Florence apparently did not choose to install, perhaps because they only bloom once

a season in contrast to the repeatedly blooming 'Talisman'. In retrospect Florence's was a brilliant choice on some deeper level.

Because Florence Bixby and her family used their gardens as "outdoor rooms", attention has been paid to restoration and replication of the original wrought iron garden furniture, pots, and artifacts. Della Robbia plaques purchased in Italy by Mrs. Bixby in 1926, have been carefully restored by conservators, Wharton & Griswold. Working from historic photos, Cloverleaf Studios replicated a large carved terra cotta bench and a number of vessels and jars. Cottonwood Designs recreated the tile and Cloverleaf Studios fabricated the sundial — a beautiful allegorical scene supported on a central pedestal by four elephants. The sundial's colors of gold, deep blue, green, and magenta anchor the colors of the surrounding roses. The beds radiate out in yellows and golds, fading to pinks — bordered by a strong red band of 'General MacArthur' (1905) roses.

The language of the original sundial motto could not be recaptured, and in choosing another, Seager wanted something other than the usual *carpe diem*. Again the answer was at hand. Within hours of discussing the search for an appropriate motto, Morrissey happened to be browsing through the Sunday paper and came across a review for a publication about sundials. There she found *utere non reditura* — "Use it, for it will not return." If, on first reading, this message seems vaguely ironic for a restored garden, a second reading suggests a particular aptness, for the Latin stresses the evanescent human experience of the garden rather than the physical setting.

Care and planning as a means of achieving authenticity are the hallmarks of the Rancho Los Alamitos restoration, qualities that we rightly respect. But happily, Mother Nature has spontaneously produced a very nice touch of her own. Two of the canes of the oldest 'Talisman' at the entrance to the Oleander Walk have produced a color sport. Due to a genetic instability, 'Talisman' is particularly known for producing sports. Records show the listing of a 'Talisman No. 5' indicating there had been three preceding sports at some time. None of these are now commercially available.

Explains Morrissey, "Normally 'Talisman' is a beige shaded with some orange and gold. The color sport is a deep fuchsia. 'Talisman' has a very strong smell, sweet but spicy, and the sport has a very similar smell." When cuttings from the sport are grown on their own roots, the new color holds, and Rancho Los Alamitos is working with a local nursery to see if the sport has any commercial viability. More important — they will register it with the American Rose Society as a new rose: "And," says Morrissey, "we're going to call it 'Florence Bixby'."

[Rancho Los Alamitos, 6400 Bixby Hill Road, Long Beach, CA 90815 562-431-3541. Hours: Wednesday through Sunday, 1-5 pm. Admission free of charge.]



## 1999 CONFERENCE AT RANCHO LOS ALAMITOS

Our annual meeting and conference for 1999 is scheduled to be held at Rancho Los Alamitos in August, the exact date still undetermined at this time. We should have the specifics available by the next issue of *Eden*. Please hold August weekends open for now so you may plan on attending this conference. We look forward to seeing you there.

Mary Morrissey, Curator for the Rose Garden at Los Alamitos, is hosting the conference. She advises that several gardens at the Rancho have either been recently restored, or are now in the process of restoration. Consequently, conference speakers will be largely in-house and will focus on describing in detail the process by which these restorations are being done.

Nearby Rancho Los Cerritos will certainly be one of the gardens visited during the conference. An article by Marie Barnidge-McIntyre on this historic site appeared in the Spring, 1998 issue of *Pacific Horticulture*. We've included a brief synopsis here for those of you who may not be subscribers.

John Temple first acquired the land, then built the house, a two-story adobe, in 1844. An elaborate ornamental garden was planted behind the house. In 1866, Temple sold the property to the Flint-Bixby family. The family lived there for a time, but by 1921, the adobe had been let to tenants for almost forty years, and the gardens had all but disappeared. Llewellyn Bixby Jr. acquired the property from the Bixby Land Company, and in 1931, work began on the gardens.

"He hired Ralph D. Cornell, a partner in Cook, Hall & Cornell, and the first professional landscape architect to open an office in Los Angeles. Cornell's informal plan was accepted in March, 1931; installation of plants began immediately, with Cornell overseeing the work."

In 1956, this once private estate, now owned by the city of Long Beach, was opened to the public as a museum, including a research library. "The gardens were appreciated, but no management plan was developed...Different visions were debated for the site; at one time it was proposed to take it back to the Flint-Bixby era, returning to the raised beds and dusty courtyards, since no other 1870s garden is represented in the area. Many 1930s estates are around, but the loss of Cornell's work would have been tragic, as this is his only private garden for students and the public to view. The selection of plants, many no longer readily available in the nursery trade, would also have been lost..."

In 1990, it was decided that "the twentieth century changes made to structure and site were in fact valuable enough to preserve and restore...The house depicts the lifestyle of the Bixbys in the 1870s and the library has grown to be an important source for those researching California history...The restoration of the gardens is on-going, and Ralph Cornell's plan becomes steadily more clear."

[Rancho Los Cerritos, 4600 Virginia Road, Long Beach, 90807 562-570-1755. Hours: Wednesday through Sunday, 1-5 pm. Admission free of charge.]

## THE GARDENER'S PRAYER

O Lord, grant that it in some way may rain every day, say from about midnight until three o'clock in the morning — but you see, it must be gentle and warm so that it can soak in; grant that at the same time it would not rain on Campion, Alyssum, Helianthemum, Lavender and the others which You in Your infinite wisdom know are drought-loving plants — I will write their names on a bit of paper if You like — & grant that the sun may shine the whole day long, but not everywhere (not, for instance on Spirea, or on Gentian, Plantain-lily or Rhododendron), and not too much; that there be plenty of dew and little wind, enough worms, no plant lice and snails, no mildew, and that once a week thin liquid manure and guano may fall from Heaven.

—Karel Capek, author of *The Gardener's Year*

## BOOK NEWS & REVIEWS

*California Gardens*. Winifred Starr Dobyns, (Santa Barbara: Allen A. Knoll, 1996), reprint of the 1931 edition with a new introduction by Carol Greentree, 231 pp., \$55.00.

*California Gardens*, first published in 1931, was an early effort to define the qualities that set California gardens apart from their eastern counterparts. In 1925 Winifred Starr Dobyns (1886-1963) moved from Chicago to Pasadena where she practiced landscape architecture and wrote and lectured on garden design for the rest of her life. Myron Hunt, an important Pasadena architect and son of a Chicago nurseryman, was a frequent collaborator and helped with this book.

The book begins with a two-page foreword by Hunt and an eight-page text by Dobyns, followed by 208 black-and-white photographs of gardens throughout the state. Dobyns explains the climate, plant material, architecture, history, water, walls, and outdoor living rooms that distinguish California gardens. The full-page plates are organized by themes such as entrances, courtyards, stairs, sculpture, or rose gardens. The historic restorations should not be overlooked. The focus is on detail; plans are not included, nor are gardens documented in their entirety. Dobyns emphasizes work in the Pasadena and Santa Barbara areas, but outstanding gardens from San Diego, San Francisco, Monterey, and Palm Springs are also illustrated. Some photographs had previously been published in the influential *California Arts and Architecture* and *Sunset*. Dobyns firmly established Mediterranean gardening as the appropriate regional style in California.

Since the original edition is scarce, (Quest Rare Books listed a first edition for \$135), this limited re-



print of 1,000 copies is welcome. Carol Greentree provides a new introduction and biographical material on Dobyns and many of the landscape designers and photographers. Some of the gardens are well known, and several are public, but the status of most remains undocumented. The biographies are generally helpful; however, the entry on the Olmsted confuses the work of the father and sons. Despite minor shortcomings, this edition of *California Gardens* will interest both landscape historians and designers.

—Margaretta J. Darnall

May Brawley Hill, author of *Grandmother's Garden* (reviewed in earlier issues of *Eden*) has a new book out, *Furnishing The Old-Fashioned Garden—Three Centuries of Summerhouses, Dovecotes, Pergolas, Privies, Fences and Birdhouses*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., NY, 160 pp., 51 color photographs, \$40. This is the "review" from The Garden Book Club catalog:

In her new book, Hill returns to early American gardens to explore the alluring architectural elements that have graced our garden landscapes over the past 300 years. *Furnishing the Old-Fashioned Garden* is the first book to concentrate on the tradition of these structures, locating individual trellises, arbors, fences, summerhouses, and other outbuildings in the context of their specific period, place, and garden style.

May Hill draws on evidence from American paintings, period photographs, historical narratives, and personal recollections as she explains which structures



are appropriate to a weathered clapboard house, an adobe ranch, a bungalow, or a modern split-level. She traces the origins of the still popular hexagonal summerhouse, examines the role dovecotes played in the garden, and enumerates the reasons for the sudden popu-

larity of the pergola in Arts and Crafts gardens in the early 1900s. Many of these handcrafted, wooden structures are as relevant for today's gardens as they were for the gardens of earlier eras.

*Furnishing the Old-Fashioned Garden* is filled with fascinating illustrations, ranging from photographs of "necessary houses" in colonial gardens to such influential examples of American art as Charles Willson Peale's *View of the Garden at Belfield* and Winslow Homer's *Girl Watering Plants*. With insight and taste, Hill conducts readers on a very personal tour through three centuries of American garden history, revealing the remarkable diversity and beauty of our garden heritage.

## SOURCES FOR NEW BOOKS

If you don't live near a good bookstore, you may wish to investigate the following mail-order sources:

**American Nurseryman**, Attn: Book Dept., 77 W. Washington St., Suite 2100, Chicago, IL 60602-2904 Phone: 1-800-621-5727 Fax: 1-312-782-3232 E-mail: [books@amerinursery.com](mailto:books@amerinursery.com) Website: [www.amerinursery.com](http://www.amerinursery.com).

This is probably the largest single source for mail-order books, videos and CD-Roms on landscape design (and all other aspects of professional gardening); though they carry no titles specific to California gardens, you can find *People In A Landscape*, a work written for students of landscape architecture by Garrett Eckbo, Chip Sullivan, et al. There are many other titles useful for the amateur as well.

**Timber Press, Inc.**, 133 SW Second Avenue, Suite 450, Portland, OR 97204. Phone: 1-800-327-5680 E-mail: [orders@timber-press.com](mailto:orders@timber-press.com) Website: [www.timber-press.com](http://www.timber-press.com).

These are publishers of books on Horticulture and the Art and History of Landscape and Garden Design. In past years, they have produced a number of titles, including *Landscaping The American Dream: The Gardens and Film Sets of Florence Yoch, 1890-1972*. This is available in hardcover for \$45.00. They also stock a large number of specialty plant books.

**Capability's Books**, 2379 Highway 46, Deer Park, WI 54007-7506 Phone: 800-247-8154 Fax: 715-269-5531.

This company carries many, many titles on a wide variety of gardening subjects, including landscape design. They have a paperback edition of *Gardens Are For People*, by Thomas Church for \$25.00. They also carry the excellent pattern books, *Brick Pavement*, and *Fences*, both by Peter Joel Harrison, showing patterns based on walk-ways, terraces, entrances, wooden fences, rails, picket boards/pales, posts, finials, etc., found at Colonial Williamsburg and other historic American properties, for \$35.00 each.

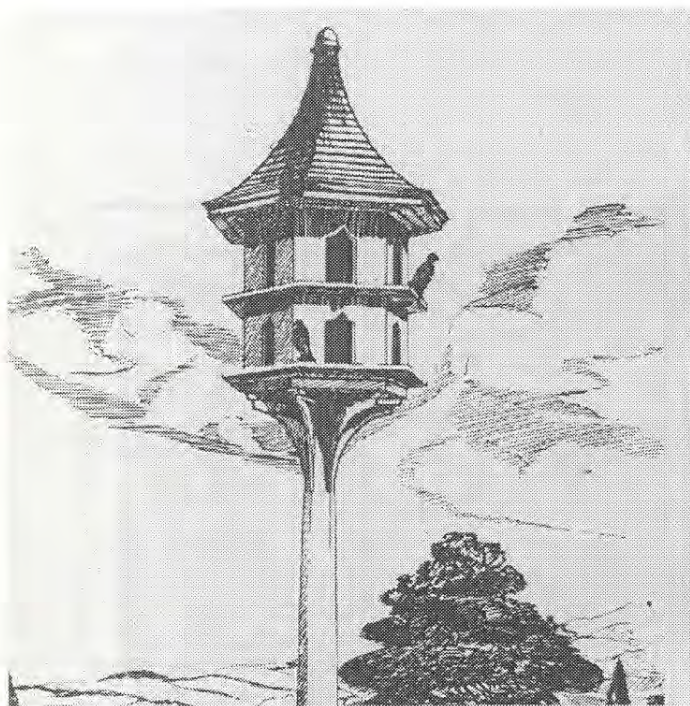


**Landscape Architecture Bookstore**, American Society of Landscape Architects, Box 753, Waldorf, MD 20604 Phone: 1-800-787-2665 Fax: 301-843-0159.

You don't have to be a member to purchase books from them, you just don't get the membership discount. They currently list Streatfield's book, *California Gardens: Creating A New Eden*, and the reprint of Dobyns' book reviewed elsewhere in this issue.

**The Garden Book Club**, Box 6028, Delran, NJ 08075-9676. Website: [www.booksonline.com/gbc](http://www.booksonline.com/gbc).

See *Horticulture* magazine for their ads. You get three books at \$1.99 each when you join, and are obligated to buy a minimum of three more books at member's prices over a period of two years. After that,



you earn bonus points for each purchase. Hugh Johnson's *Principles of Gardening* was offered for \$1.99, counting as two choices because it normally sells for \$40.

Be sure to specify in writing when you send in the application form that you want the kind of membership where they do NOT ship the book-of-the-month to you unless you order it. That will save you from getting stuff you didn't want in the first place. You usually save \$5 to \$10 on the price of their books.

May Brawley Hill's new book is one of the current selections available in the catalogue, along with such interesting titles as *Knot Gardens & Parterres — A History of the Knot Garden and How To Make One Today* by Robin Whalley and Anne Jennings. Publisher's price \$45, GBC price \$38.50, bonus price \$22.50 with four accumulated points, (usually one point earned per book purchased).

**Other sources for books:** Don't forget to check out your local botanical garden and museum bookstores. Bill Grant informs us he just purchased a copy of Jere Stuart French's *The California Garden* from the Santa Barbara Botanic Gardens bookstore for around \$48.00. And, at a recent visit to the Oakland Museum, we spotted the paperback edition of *The Arts & Crafts Movement in California: Living the Good Life*, Kenneth R. Trapp, editor; the garden section written by David Streatfield was mentioned in last issue's book reviews.

## SOURCES FOR ANTIQUE PLANTS

"After the Garden of Eden, man's great temptation occurred when he first received a seed catalog." —*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

**Old House Gardens**, 536 Third Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48103-4957 Phone: 734-995-1486 Fax: 734-995-1687 E-mail: [OHGBulbs@aol.com](mailto:OHGBulbs@aol.com). Website: [www.oldhousegardens.com](http://www.oldhousegardens.com). Credit cards accepted. Catalogue \$2.

It is too late to order most items now, but this catalogue makes interesting reading at any time. Make a note on your calendar to order one for the coming fall, if not immediately. Proprietor Scott Kunst is an **Heirloom Bulb Specialist**. We fell into instant plant lust over the color photo of double daffodil 'Irene Copeland' (introduced in 1923) in this year's catalog.

Scott also offers three reprints of **antique bulb catalogues** for those who like to read about what used to be. There is a useful-sounding softcover book, *Landscapes and Gardens for Historic Buildings*, "a classic guide to preserving home landscapes" which includes plant lists by era, instruction on how to research a site and develop a plan, and how to maintain a historic landscape. A great value for \$25.50 postpaid.

AND he carries some truly old Dutch tulips, including 'Zomerschoon' (1620), "exquisitely patterned with shades of rose on a ground of rich cream." Yes, they are \$8.00 apiece, but that's what you get for being crazy about antique stuff!

In addition to Crocus, Daffodils, Hyacinths, Freesias, etc., Old House Gardens now offers antique Cannas, Dahlias, Crinums, Gladiolus, Elephant Ears (*Colocasia esculenta*), Lilies and Rain Lilies (*Zephyranthes*), Tuberose, single and double, all with dates of introduction and other tidbits of information about historical usage.

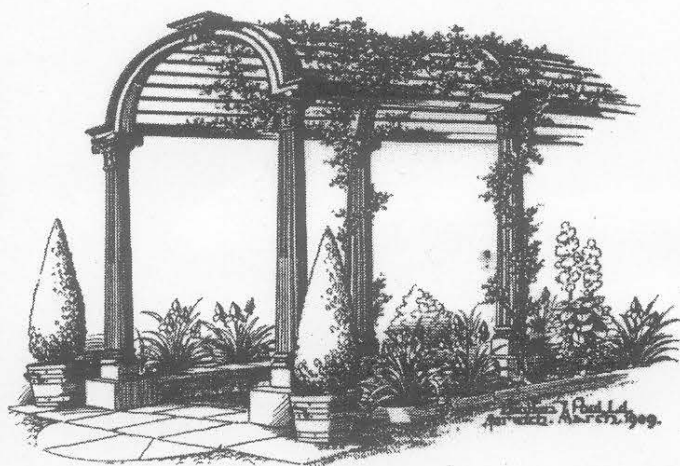
## COMING EVENTS

**February 6** — Strybing Arboretum (and *Horticulture* magazine) present "**Command Performance: Designing Drama, Mystery and Surprise into the Garden**", a symposium with Tony Avent, Patrick Chasse, Anna Pavord, Chris Woods, and Tom Hobbs, 8:30-4 pm. Registration \$109 includes lunch; advance registration required. Call 415-661-1316 x354.



**February 26** – On Friday evening, at 5:30 p.m., CG&LHS Vice President Laurie Hannah and Publicity Chair Susan Chamberlin will host a **regional meeting of the California Garden and Landscape History Society** in Santa Barbara. There will be refreshments, resource sharing, and a slide show on the history of Santa Barbara gardens. Admission to the meeting is \$4. It will be held in the library of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, located at 1212 Mission Canyon Road. Members, potential members, and friends are welcome. For information contact Laurie at the Botanic Garden 805-682-4726, ext. 107 or Susan at 805-687-2797.

**March 4 thru 7** – “California Green Rush”, the San Francisco winter **conference of the Association of Professional**



**Professional Landscape Designers**, featuring lectures and tours. For information, contact the Association, Suite 1500, 104 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603 312-201-0101.

**March 18 thru 21** – **San Francisco Flower & Garden Show**, featuring 24 gardens, floral designs, marketplace, educational exhibits, lectures, and demonstrations. Gala Preview Party Wednesday 5-9 pm, Thursday and Sunday 9-6:30 pm, Friday and Saturday 9-9 pm. Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Avenue, Daly City, 800-829-9751. Admission is \$12.50 or \$10.50 in advance (plus parking fee). Call for schedule of events, or check the local newspapers.

**March 25 thru 27** – Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden presents, “**Out of the Wild and Into the Garden IV: California’s Horticulturally Significant Plants**,” a symposium with presentations on the propagation, cultivation, selection, conservation, and restoration of California’s native plants. RSABG, 1500 North College Avenue, Claremont. Call 909-625-8767 for registration information.

**April 17** – Wave Hill’s **CATALOG of Landscape Records** in the United States, in partnership with the National Park Service Historic Landscape Initiative, The Garden Club of America, and the Cultural Landscape

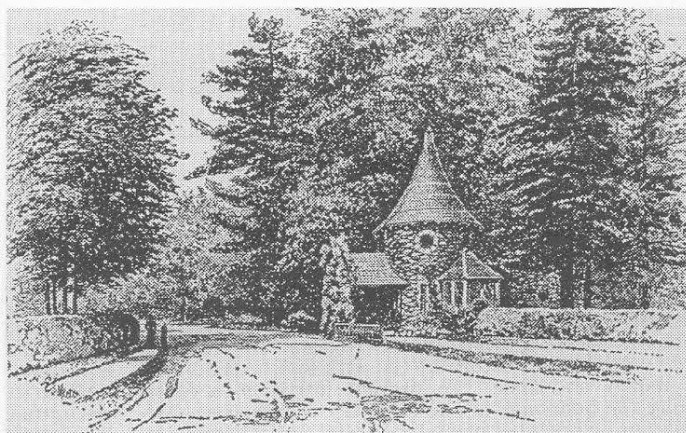
Foundation, will present a symposium entitled, “**If Only We Knew: Landscape Preservation in Context, 1890-1950**.” The fee for the symposium (which includes breakfast, lunch, and closing reception) is \$128 if paid before March 17. For reservations and information, please call Chris Panos, Assistant Director of the CATALOG, at 718-549-3200, ext. 204.

**April 17 & 18** – Descanso Gardens will be holding their **Garden Festival**, to include displays by local horticultural societies. Is anyone interested in camping out on Descanso’s lawn for two days (festival hours are 9-4 pm) and handing out brochures, etc., on behalf of CGLHS? If so, please call Descanso 818-952-4401 to reserve a spot, then contact Laurie Hannah for the brochures (805-969-3526 x107) and Marlea Graham for the et ceteras (925-335-9182).

**May 23 thru June 11** – Founder Bill Grant is leading a **tour of French gardens**, to include participation in the 8th International Heritage Roses Conference in Lyon. The theme will be French Roses, with bilingual translation of lectures provided, also pre- and post-conference tours to Grignan, Lyon, and Burgundy. When the conference-connected tours conclude on June 1, Bill’s garden tour begins. We will see: Giverny, Clos de Coudray, Le Vasterival, Chateau de Miromesnil, Chateau de Vandrimare, to name just a few, and of course, for the roses alone, Bagatelle and Rosarie de l’Hay. For full details, contact Port of Travel, 9515 Soquel Drive, Suite 102, Aptos, CA 95003 Phone: 831-688-6004 Fax: 831-688-6094.

Remember that we mentioned **Katherine Greenberg’s late spring tour of Spain** in our last issue. For details contact Katherine at 925-283-4322.

**August (exact date to be announced) – Annual Meeting and Conference of CG&LHS** at Rancho Los Alamitos will include a thorough discussion of techniques used in restoring various Rancho garden sections as well as a tour of nearby Rancho Los Cerritos. Further details will appear in the next issue of *Eden*.





## ODDS & ENDS

**\*Website Information** – the below information was obtained from *Garden Design* magazine (1998, issue not noted):

**The Catalog of Landscape Records** – [www.wavehill.org](http://www.wavehill.org) – As reported in previous issues, you may request a search for data or contribute your own information via this Website.

**Traditional Gardening** – [www.traditionalgardening.com](http://www.traditionalgardening.com) – Browse through current or back issues of a newsletter dedicated to creating and restoring period landscapes.

**Museum of Garden History** – [www.cix.co.uk/~museumgh](http://www.cix.co.uk/~museumgh) – take a virtual tour of the London museum. Check out feature stories on historic figures and links to related sites.

**Reel Lawn Mower History & Preservation Project** – [www.crocker.com/~jricci](http://www.crocker.com/~jricci) – learn about American's age-old love affair with fresh-cut grass. Then link up with England's Old Lawnmower Club and the British Lawn Mower Museum.

\*The Spring, 1999 issue of *Pacific Horticulture* contains an article by our Treasurer, Kathleen Craig on "**The Williams House and Gardens: A Work in Progress.**"

Kathleen was engaged to develop and implement a garden preservation plan for the property in 1995. There are no known landscape plans but other historical documents have assisted the restoration project. "We have interviewed individuals with first-hand knowledge of the garden over its eighty years, and studied family documents, including archival photographs. These, together with the physical details of the hardscape and plantings, have told us much about how the garden fit into the daily life of the Williams family."

The Williams House, which now houses the Museum of American Heritage, is located at 351 Homer Avenue in Palo Alto and is open to the public Friday through Sunday from 11 am to 4 pm. There is no admission charge. For information on tours, lectures and workshops, or volunteer opportunities, contact the museum at Box 1731, Palo Alto, CA 94302-1731 or phone 650-321-1004.

**\*Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes**, (formerly the *Journal of Garden History*), is a very prestigious, international quarterly which has been publishing articles on scholarly research for about 18 years. Most of us may find the annual subscription fee of \$368.00 rather daunting, but if you live near a university that offers a program in landscape design, you may find their library is a subscriber. Abstracts and an index of articles appear in the *American History and Life* index and the *MLA Bibliography*, also most likely to be found at a university library.

Mitzi VanSant sent away for a free sample copy and received the Spring, 1998 issue, a small, softcover book measuring 11" x 8.5" with seventy pages of text including black and white illustrations (and footnotes — 83 for one article was the record in this issue). This

journal's theme is "Seventeenth Century French Garden History," and contains four articles on the subject, as well as two reviews of books on other topics.

Inside back cover instructions for would-be contributors advise, "The journal proposes to maintain and strengthen the multi-disciplinary approach to garden history that has characterized the early stages of a relatively new subject. While a main emphasis of the journal will be on documentation of individual gardens in all parts of the world, articles on other relevant topics — iconography, aesthetics, botany and horticulture, technology, social and economics history, conservation and restoration of historic gardens, geography, history of ideas — will always be considered for publication."

Past issues have included topics on the history of California gardens. The bibliography of David Streatfield's book, *California Gardens: Creating A New Eden* contains references to two articles he has written for this journal: "Echoes of England and Italy 'On the Edge of the World': Green Gables and Charles Greene" and "Paradise on the Frontier: Victorian Gardens on the San Francisco Peninsula." No doubt there are others of possible interest.

To obtain your own free sample copy or to subscribe, contact the publishers, Taylor & Francis, Inc., 47 Runway Road, Suite G, Levittown, PA 19057-4700 Phone: 215-269-0400 Fax: 215-269-0363 E-mail: [journal-samples@tandfpa.com](mailto:journal-samples@tandfpa.com), also [journal-orders@tandfpa.com](mailto:journal-orders@tandfpa.com). In addition, see: [bkorders@taylorandfrancis.com](mailto:bkorders@taylorandfrancis.com) and [info@taylorandfrancis.com](mailto:info@taylorandfrancis.com). Last, but not least is the Website: [www.taylorandfrancis.com](http://www.taylorandfrancis.com). They accept checks and credit cards.

\*Are you in the market for plant labels? Check out Orion Industries, 4436 Grange Road, Santa Rosa 95404 Phone: 707-529-8707 (call 8-5 pm) Fax: 707-579-3791 E-mail: [info@gardenmarker.com](mailto:info@gardenmarker.com) and Website: [www.gardenmarker.com](http://www.gardenmarker.com).

They have an assortment of styles. We found the "traditional write-on tags" particularly attractive as they have a somewhat antique look to them and are sold in stainless steel or copper, at \$7.45 for a package of three for the staked models, and \$5.45 for a package of ten for the wired-on, hanging labels.

### Illustrations this issue:

1. *Val Verde, front view, Val Verde brochure.*
- 2-3. *Bixby family photograph, 1911; Map, Los Alamitos brochure.*
4. *Olmsted plan for Rose Garden, Landscape Architecture, 6/97, "The Name of the Rose", Jane Brown Gillette.*
5. *Pepper-pot garden house, American Gardens in the Eighteenth Century, Ann Leighton, 1976.*
- 6-7. *Dovecote; Pergola, The Victorian Garden Catalogue, Daphne Ledward, 1995..*
8. *Entrance to an American residence park, The Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture, L. H. Bailey, 1958.*



## *California Garden and Landscape History Society*

### *Aims and Purposes*

To celebrate the beauty, wealth, and diversity of California gardens and landscapes.

\*

To aid and promote interest in, study of, and education about California garden and landscape history.

\*

To identify, document, restore, and preserve gardens and landscapes depicting California's culture and history.

\*

To collect and/or coordinate resources and expertise about the history of California's gardens and landscapes.

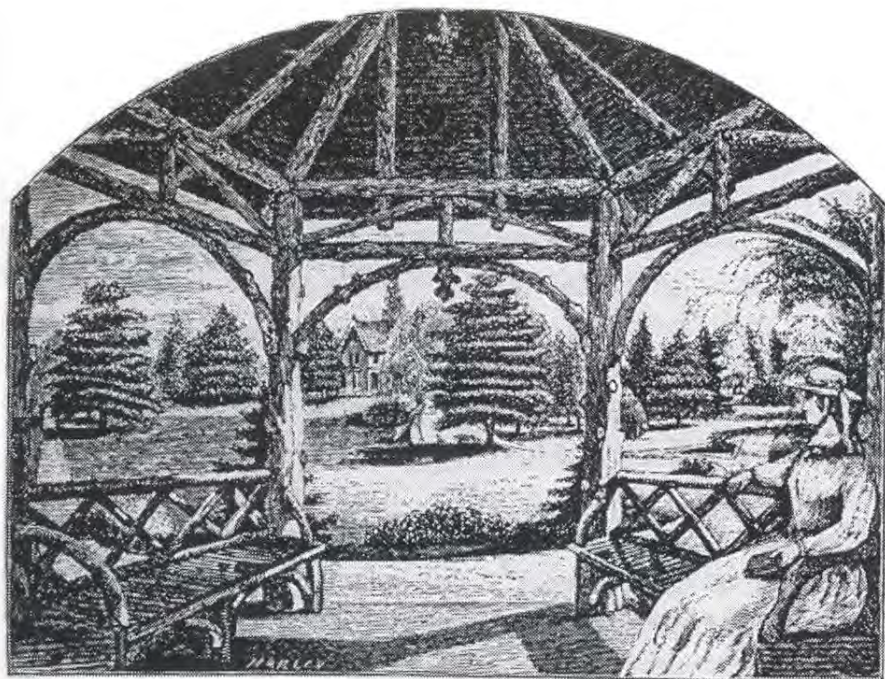
\*

To visit on various occasions historical gardens, landscapes, archives and libraries in different parts of the State.

\*

To enjoy one another's company at meetings, garden visits, and other get-togethers.

**California Garden & Landscape History Society**  
**P. O. Box 1338**  
**Sebastopol, CA 95473**



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