

CBHL 53rd Annual Meeting Meeting Planning in Difficult Times

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Smithsonian Libraries and Archives is proud to be hosting, virtually, the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries (CBHL) from Washington, DC, May 5-7, 2021.

Our theme appropriately is: "What's Next? The 21st Century Botanical & Horticultural Library."

I hope at this conference CBHL members will be able to explore what is next for our unique and wonderful libraries and profession, and to provide each other with solutions on how to navigate these difficult times in meaningful ways.

Member presentations will hopefully address the variety of economical, societal and environmental issues we are now facing as information professionals. The following statement was written before the COVID-19 pandemic rocked our world and is making everything, including planning this conference, more challenging.

The coming century will be challenging for libraries of all kinds, but botanical and horticultural libraries can anticipate a particularly important role as evidence mounts of the ways in which climate change increasingly affects our world, from large-scale agriculture to neighborhood gardens to the exploration/discovery/cultivation of new food sources.


The host committee is again Robin Everly, Branch Librarian, Botany and Horticulture Library; Barbara Ferry, Interim Manager, Research Services; and Leslie Overstreet, Curator of Natural History Rare Books. To accommodate the West Coasters, the meeting will start each day by 11:00 am (Eastern Daylight Time). The meeting sessions, mostly through Zoom software, will be broken into chunks of two to three hour time periods to reduce being in front of your computer too long. We are looking into an alternative software for social events.

As of this writing, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Smithsonian Institution is still closed to visitors and library staff is on 100% telework. How this will affect the host committee as we continue to plan the future conference is unknown.

The meeting program is still under development. All the essentials – committee and business meetings, member presentations, and an Annual Literature Award program – are being planned. What is going to be difficult is giving you a flavor of Smithsonian Libraries and Archives and the surrounding area be-

cause we have not been on site for close to a year. Barbara Ferry will do a presentation on Libraries and Archives's Research Services. Robin Everly will present on the history of the Botany and Horticulture Library. Right now, we are planning to do these as PowerPoint presentations, but that may change, if we are allowed back in our Libraries within a reasonable amount of time to prepare a short video.

I have also contacted Smithsonian Gardens for stock footage of their gardens and I may be able to get their staff to present to us as well. We have contacted Dr. W. John Kress, Curator Emeritus of Botany, Smithsonian Institution, and have asked him to be our keynote speaker again and are awaiting a reply. Finally, it may be difficult due to time zones, but I'm hoping since we are having a virtual meeting, we can somehow engage with our colleagues in the European Botanical and Horticultural Libraries (EBHL). I have titled the event, "From coffee to tea to wine" and I hope by the time this newsletter is published, this idea will be confirmed.

Most of all, I hope that CBHL members can meet and learn from each other, process 2020, most unbelievable year in my lifetime, as well as enjoy fellowship and friendship with each other via our laptops. 

From the President

Brandy Kuhl

Library Director

Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture

San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum

One of my favorite things about CBHL is how democratic and involved we are as an organization. Our members are passionate: about librarianship, community, helping one another, and about CBHL!

Despite the pandemic, our accomplishments in 2020 were impressive. As an organization, and individually by our members, we quickly adapted to unprecedented circumstances.

Beginning in 2019, the Ad Hoc Committee on Board Structure took on the substantial task of reviewing CBHL board structure to ensure effective board organization. The committee reviewed tasks and responsibilities of board members, board structure, and board expenses, and then recommended changes to improve overall function of the board and financial stewardship of CBHL.

The recommended changes were presented to the membership in March and the updated Bylaws were approved by membership in July 2020. The most substantial changes to the board included: reducing the number of board members to five from six, reducing the term of service for board members to three years, and realigning and rebalancing board member tasks.

Many thanks to the members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Board Structure for volunteering their time and expertise to help ensure that CBHL is an effective, flexible, and cooperative organization.

As with many organizations, CBHL had to cancel in-person meetings. Instead, we hosted our first-ever virtual events! The Smithsonian Libraries hosted a virtual annual meeting in May and the Annual Literature Award Committee hosted a virtual Annual Literature Award announcement in October.

Many thanks to all the CBHL members who made these virtual events possible.

I very much look forward to seeing you all at this year's virtual Annual Meeting in May 2021, again kindly hosted by the Smithsonian Libraries and Archives.

Lastly, to find out more about how CBHL members are coping with the pandemic, we have put together a brief survey. You might have already received it. I encourage you to take a few minutes to fill it out, thank you!

Brandy Kuhl

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Transcribing Scientific Notebooks and Garden Talks

Amanda Lettner

LTA & Digitization Specialist

Lenhardt Library, Chicago Botanic Garden

In 2018, the Chicago Botanic Garden's Lenhardt Library received a generous Illinois State Library digitization grant of \$73,368. This grant, for uniquely held items in Illinois, allowed us to digitize one-of-a-kind, handwritten, nineteenth-century manuscripts as well as our member magazine, *Garden Talks* (aka *Garden Talk*). The scientific notebooks of German orchidologist Friedrich ("Fritz") Wilhelm Ludwig Kränzlin and French lily specialist Pierre Étienne Simon Duchartre, and *Garden Talks* were uploaded to the [Illinois Digital Archives \(IDA\)](#), an open and freely-accessible repository for digital collections of Illinois libraries and cultural institutions containing historical documents. The project continued the library's previous grant work to digitize and transcribe Kränzlin's unpublished works. The scientific notebooks of Kränzlin and Duchartre were transcribed using [FromThePage](#). FromThePage is browser-based software that allows volunteers to transcribe and index handwritten documents. It was an easy choice to use FromThePage, as the New York Botanical Garden's Mertz Library had already used it for the transcription of the [John Torrey Papers](#). Our counterparts at Mertz



Friedrich ("Fritz") Wilhelm Ludwig Kränzlin (1847–1934)

From: Steve Manning and Rudolf Jenny, *Discovering New World Orchids* (Nantwich: Manning, 2010), p. 511.



Pierre Étienne Simon Duchartre (1811–1894)

From: Société botanique de France. 1854. *Bulletin de la Société botanique de France*. (Paris: Société botanique de France, 1854), Plate 1.

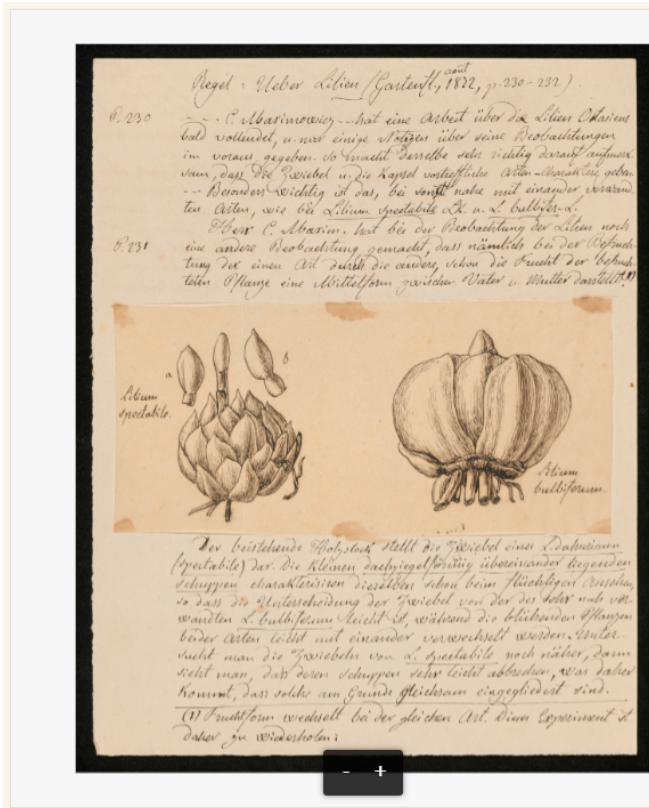


One of the thumbnails used to advertise Manuscript 11 of Kränzlin's *Descriptions of orchid genera*. A rendering of *Herschelia coelestis* based on Plate 1 from *The Quarterly Journal of Science and the Arts*, Vol. 6. From: Kränzlin, Friedrich Wilhelm Ludwig. [Descriptions of orchid genera] [manuscript], 1880-1908. Manuscript 11, p. 361.

laid the groundwork for us and we modeled our documentation after theirs—from the Lib-Guide to the volunteer instructions and guidelines.

With a few clicks on my part, the notebooks were easily ingested from CONTENTdm into FromThePage. FromThePage allowed for customization of the collection. One can upload attractive project thumbnails and write brief descriptions of the items. Transcription conventions, available below the transcription field, are also customizable to the project. Although we used the same transcription standards for both Kränzlin and Duchartre, we were able to list plant-specific resources for each—orchid resources for Kränzlin and lily resources for Duchartre.

We had the help of four dedicated volunteers to transcribe the notebooks, although many more stumbled across the project online via FromThePage or social media and provided much needed assistance. Even if they only transcribed one page, some of these "passersby" provided the key to deciphering



A screenshot of FromThePage transcriptions: Duchartre's notes from Gartenflora, Vol. 21, 1872, p. 231. From: Duchartre, Pierre Etienne Simon. [Collection of manuscript notes, drawings, and photographs on lilies]. 1870-1880, p. 188.

Preview Autolink

Regel : Ueber Lilien (Gartenfl. [Gartenflora], août 1872, p.230-232).

P.230 ... [[C. Maximowicz]] ... hat eine Arbeit über die Lilien Ostasiens bald vollendet, u. nur einige Notizen über seine Beobachtungen im voraus gegeben. So macht derselbe sehr richtig darauf aufmerksam, dass die Zwiebel u. die Kapsel vortreffliche arten-charaktere geben. ... Besonders wichtig ist das, bei sonst nahe mit einander verwandten arten, wie bei [[Lilium spectabile|Lilium spectabile Lk.]] u. [[Lilium bulbiferum|L. bulbifer. L.]]

Herr C. Maxim. hat bei der Beobachtung der Lilien noch P. 231 eine andere Beobachtung gemacht, dass nämlich bei der Befruchtung der einen art durch die andere, schon die Frucht der befruchteten Pflanze eine Mittelform zwischen Vater u. Mutter darstellt (*).

[[Lilium spectabile|Lilium spectabile]]
[pencil sketches]
[[Lilium bulbiferum|Lilium bulbiferum]]

Der beistehende Holzstock stellt die Zwiebel eines [[Lilium dahuricum|L. dahuricum]] (spectabile) dar. Die Kleinen dachziegelförmig übereinander liegenden Schuppen charakterisiren dieselben schon beim flüchtigen ansehen, so dass die Unterscheidung der Zwiebel von der des sehr nah verwandten [[Lilium bulbiferum|L. bulbiferum]] leicht ist, während die blühenden Pflanzen beider arten leicht mit einander verwechselt werden. Untersucht man die Zwiebeln von [[Lilium spectabile|L. spectabile]] noch näher, dann sieht man, dass deren Schuppen sehr leicht abbrechen, was daher kommt, dass solche am Grunde gleichsam eingegliedert sind.

(* Fruchtform wechselt bei der gleichen art. Dieses Experiment ist daher zu wiederholen.

handwriting or shorthand. Between both sets of notebooks, we had a total of 40 collaborators who transcribed 1,712 pages over the course of a year! The project was completed in the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, officially ending in June 2020.

Meanwhile, the transcriptions for the digitized Garden Talks magazine archive were generated using OCR software, ABBYY Finereader, and then uploaded to IDA's DAM, CONTENTdm. ABBYY Finereader worked well in conjunction with CONTENTdm, producing text documents that uploaded easily alongside the images. The text was recognized fairly well, while the formatting posed the most problems. Although sufficient, these transcriptions paled against the meticulously correct and indexed transcriptions of Kränzlin and Duchartre's notebooks.

Both the notebooks and Garden Talks are available in Illinois Digital Archives at idaillinois.org.



Cover of Garden Talk, August-September 1970.

CBHL Members' West News

Compiled by Beth Brand
Head Librarian, Schilling Library
Desert Botanical Garden

Good Things Still Happen...

Irene Holiman
Librarian
California Botanic Garden

In the midst of the pandemic, surprisingly and gratefully, the Garden received funds to staff a part-time, temporary archivist. Even more surprisingly, we were able to bring on a former staff member, who was not a Library employee, but part of the Herbarium staff, Rachel Poutasse.

Rachel joined California Botanic Garden in 2013 as a curatorial assistant in the herbarium and later became herbarium workroom manager. In 2015, she became interested in archives after assisting with the processing of the Marcus E. Jones papers and the curation of an exhibition on Jones's life and achievements as a late 19th-century botanist. She was excited to discover how Jones's papers enhanced understanding of his research and collecting work, provided a unique view of the American West through his photography and writing, and could be used to promote community education. She left the garden in 2017 to attend graduate school at UCLA and obtain a Masters in Library and Information Science with a specialization in Archival Studies. She took internships at the archives of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park, the Museum of Northern Arizona, and the Getty Research Institute before returning to California Botanic Garden in fall 2020 to survey the CalBG archives, begin processing high priority collections, and develop processing guidelines for staff and volunteers.

Rachel is a great asset to the Garden and has been a tremendous help to me. CBHL has many solo librarians who understand the difficulty in wearing more than one hat, especially when one of the hats you put on is not your area of expertise! Having Rachel onboard (hoping it's for a long while), has provided me the time to take on that backlog of unprocessed library material and leave the archive materials in more than qualified hands! Thanks Rachel!

For the past few years, California Botanic Garden has been partnering with California Revealed, a State Library initiative supported by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act. The objective of the California Revealed project is to help California libraries, and other local heritage groups, describe, digitize, preserve, and provide online access to archival materials - books, photographs, audiovisual recordings, and more. Free access and preservation services such as an in-house digitization program, are made available for partner organizations. Funding assistance is provided for processing and cataloging hidden collections as well as for community outreach projects.




Rachel Poutasse (center), CalBG Archivist, with Brandy Watts (left), former CSBR (Collections in Support of Biological Research) Project Manager at CalBG, and Mare Nazaire, Administrative Curator, RSA-POM Herbarium.



California Botanic Garden, Marcus E. Jones Exhibit - Botanical Maverick in the West, March 11 - June 30, 2017, curated by Rachel Poutasse.

We requested to have digitized and preserved a series of VHS tapes of symposium proceedings, *Out of the Wild and Into the Garden, California's Horticulturally Significant Plants*, held in 1992 and sponsored by California Botanic Garden (Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden). The conference was presided over by former Director of Horticulture Bart O'Brien and was the first of three conferences held, the other two in 1995 and 1997. Unfortunately, the 1995 and 1997 proceedings were not recorded; however, they were transcribed and printed as part of the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden Occasional Publications series. It was important to preserve the recorded content before further damage occurred and since video equipment to view the tapes has become unavailable and obsolete. The California Revealed team agreed to digitize the tapes, and now the videos are freely available to view and the content is preserved. The conference provided an opportunity for the California native plant horticultural community to come together and hear from California horticulturists such as M. Nevin Smith, David Verity, Wayne Roderick and CBHL member R. Mitchel Beauchamp.

The link to the California Revealed website and to view California Botanic Garden's digitized materials, including the symposium proceedings, is provided here. https://californiarevealed.org/collections/california-botanic-garden?islandora_solr_search_navigation=0&f%5B0%5D=librarydams_media_type_ms%3A%22Moving%5C%20Image%22 

CBHL Members' East News

Compiled by Shelly Kilroy
Librarian, Peter M. Wege Library
Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park

New Space for the Peter M. Wege Library at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park

Shelly Kilroy



On January 11, 2021, the new Peter M. Wege Library at the Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park opened its doors to guests, staff and volunteers. The new space has approximately 1½ times more linear feet of shelving than the previous library and a much more open and welcoming feel. I am hoping, and planning, that this space will be a place for quiet study, for families reading and playing board games, for hosting poetry readings, and more. These images were taken the week before the opening. For more information on the construction project that the new library is a part of, take a look at our website at www.meijergardens.org 



Book Reviews

Compiled by Gillian Hayward
Library Manager
Library and Information Services
Longwood Gardens

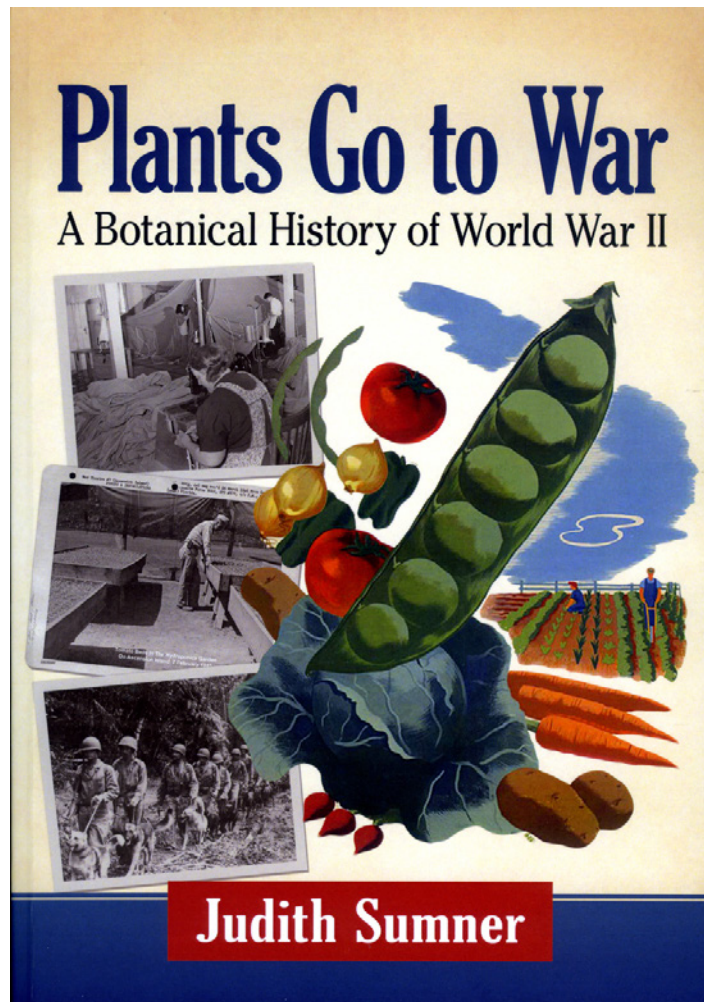
Plants Go To War: A Botanical History of World War II by Judith Sumner. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2019. [ii], 360 pages, illustrated. \$49.95 paperback. ISBN: 9781476676128.

Reviewed by Charlotte A. Tancin
Librarian, Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Carnegie Mellon University

In her preface, Judith Sumner credits Harvard ethnobotanist Richard Evans Schultes as a source of inspiration, citing his worldview that “botanical knowledge is fundamental to understanding civilization and interpreting conflict.” *Plants Go To War* is impressive in its breadth and depth of coverage, and it feels particularly resonant in our time of COVID and political crisis. Sumner looks at every aspect of how plants supported our involvement in World War II, from domestic and familiar efforts like victory gardens and rationing to broader efforts of farm mobilization, medical research, and feeding and equipping the military. The scope of the effort expended by our military in WWII is staggering. The willingness of our citizenry to help in any way they could is impressive and humbling. The importance of plants in so many aspects of this history underscores the vital significance (that phrase feels so inadequate) of plants to human survival.

Plants Go To War describes how plants played a role during WWII, mostly in the U.S. but also in England, Germany, and a bit on Europe more broadly and Japan. Sumner briefly looks back at WWI war gardens and subsistence gardens during the Great Depression (a time of shortages of jobs, money, and food – does this sound familiar?) to show 20th-century U.S. antecedents and how they sowed the seeds in the American mind for such food production programs. During WWI, creating war gardens was promoted so that U.S. agricultural products could be sent to Europe to stave off anarchy. In WWII the focus was different – we provided food to allies and also fed our troops. It was estimated that a U.S. soldier consumed a ton of food per year. Thus it was essential for citizens to begin growing their own food and for key supplies to be rationed. There was also a strong emphasis on food preservation to make garden produce last through the winters, so canning supplies and pressure cookers took on extra significance. Similar efforts in England are described, as their dependence on many imported foods and the threat of blockades of shipments led to food becoming a weapon of war. A “Dig for Victory” campaign was begun, with the admonishment that every available piece of land should be productive. We also get a brief look at wartime gardens in Germany.

A chapter on vitamins and food preservation begins with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s second



inaugural speech in 1937. He emphasized the need to build a strong population, saying that one-third of Americans were chronically hungry and nutritionally naïve. From 1928-1943 numerous Nobel prizes were given for vitamin discoveries (all but B12 coming from plants), and vitamins were being added to milk, flour and prepared foods to enrich them. A chapter on botanical diet and cookery describes the food rationing program that began in 1942 after the Pearl Harbor attack, especially restricting access to meat, sugar, coffee, butter, vegetable oils and margarine made with vegetable oils, and canned and frozen fruits and vegetables. There was a push to replace meat in American diets with legumes, and a general spirit of “making do” and making dietary substitutions. The English situation with the increasing difficulty of receiving imported goods is also discussed. The popular “Song of Potato Pete” listed various ways of cooking potatoes and added, “Enjoy them all, including chips, Remembering spuds don’t come in ships!” Food availability in Germany and across Europe is also summarized.

Sumner then shifts from highlighting domestic diets to feeding the military, a very different approach involving strategic thinking. Planned meals “provided vitamin-laced nutrition following menus developed for specific conditions and climates.” C-rations were developed around nutritional needs and the constraints of field cookery. Field ration kits also included wooden spoons, coffee, chocolate, chewing gum, sugar tablets, tobacco and toilet paper, all botanical products. We also get a look at how the Axis was handling rations and feeding their military.

A chapter on agriculture shows how American farmers responded to wartime demands. Farms were mobilized to shift from lean Depression-era production to feeding troops and supplying our allied Lend-Lease partners. Even cotton stored in warehouses came into use for military uniforms. Since a lot of agricultural seed had been coming from Holland, now occupied by Nazis, additional farms were set up here to produce seed for more crops. Farm sites also had to be set up abroad in order to furnish soldiers with fresh produce. A number of crop plants are discussed, along with soil fertility, pesticides, and biological warfare using weeds and pests. WWII farming in England and Germany are also examined.

The second half of the book focuses on non-food plant uses: medicines, fibers, timber and wood, oils, resins, and rubber. At the beginning of WWII, about half of U.S. pharmaceutical drugs included plant derivatives. Many medicinal plants were imported, and the war led to shortages. Sumner discusses home front and battlefield medicines, the latter focusing on wound and burn treatment, painkillers, stimulants, laxatives, cures or treatments for malaria and scrub typhus, and drugs such as antibiotics and penicillin. A chapter on fibers discusses plant fibers used for shelter, clothing, and essential war tools, including uniforms, tents, nets, cordage, maps, sandbags, bandages, boxes, tarps, and nitrocellulose for explosives. The many uses for wood and cellulose get a separate and intensive chapter, with a stunning reminder of the many, many things that wood and cellulose were needed for, from photographic film to gunstocks to barracks, boats, airplanes, and hangars. U.S. wartime needs resulted in massive deforestation. The country gave attention to science-based cultivation and reframed forestry as an aspect of farming. In the theaters of war, the U.S. needed knowledge of local tree species to select appropriate timber for various purposes. Sumner also discusses cork, coal, and charcoal. And, we learn that toward the end of the war, Japan manufactured 9,300 balloons – partly using botanical resources – to carry incendiary devices, and released them across the Pacific toward the U.S. in hopes that they would cause forest fires and widespread panic.

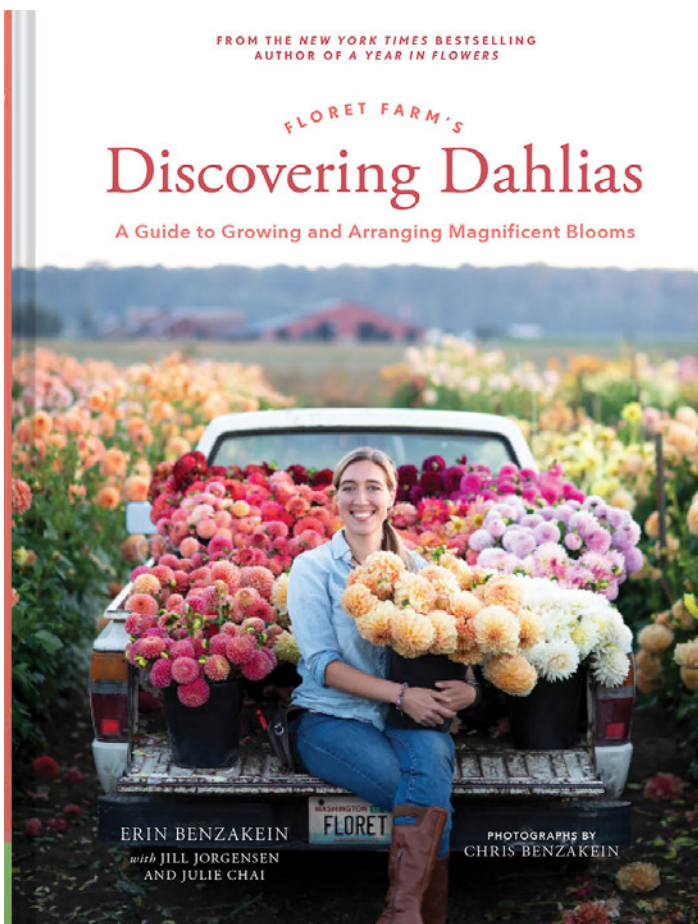
A chapter on oils, resins, and rubber is similarly informative. Some U.S. farms produced linseed, soybean, and castor oils for wartime applications. The U.S. used other plant-based oils and resins for lubrication, fuel substitutes, caulking and waterproofing, insulation, even so-called sticky bombs. Latex for rubber production was another botanical commodity in high demand. By 1942 Japan controlled 90% of the world’s latex supply, and the U.S. stockpile of rubber was inadequate. Thus tires and inner tubes were rationed, scrap drives collected rubber from all over the U.S., and in England, rations affected the supply of gum boots and elasticized corsets. The U.S.D.A. prioritized research of alternative rubber sources, and

March 2021

long-neglected rubber plantations in South America were revitalized. The chapter also contains information on German issues around latex/rubber availability.

A chapter on survival highlights soldiers in the Pacific having to maneuver through tropical forests and dense jungles. Training was done in the Hawaiian Islands, the Philippines, Australia, New Caledonia, and Saipan. Survival manuals for soldiers advised on how to live on your own in nature, especially if you got separated from the rest of your troop, and included advice on tropical, desert, and arctic environments. Ethnobotanical training could help marooned soldiers. Recognizing edible vs. toxic plants was an important skill, so the manuals included some plant illustrations. Also covered in this chapter are descriptions of deprivation and starvation encountered by prisoners and in European ghettos and labor camps, as well as by other Europeans enduring severe food shortages as the war dragged on. Japanese-Americans in U.S. internment camps grew vegetables in subsistence gardens to augment the restricted diet of government food that they received. England's Royal Horticultural Society worked with the Red Cross to send vegetables to poorly fed Allied soldiers in Italian and German prisons. In the immediate aftermath of the war, plants reasserted life amid destruction, growing among the ruins in England and Germany and in bombed areas of Japan, where some broad-leaved trees survived the atomic blast and some other plants reappeared within weeks. The blasts apparently did not damage the underground organs of some plants.

The final chapter describes the work of botanical gardens and herbaria during the war, as activities and research continued. The book ends with notes, an 11-page bibliography, and index. Sumner has done a superb job at organizing and laying out the many aspects of this history. She covered a lot of ground, resulting in a book highly recommended for libraries and for readers with an interest in history, botany, horticulture, food, or the military.



Floret Farm's Discovering Dahlias: A Guide to Growing and Arranging Magnificent Blooms by Erin Benzakein with Jill Jorgensen and Julie Chai. Photographs by Chris Benzakein. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, March 9, 2021. 224 pages, color photographs. Hardcover, \$24.95. ISBN: 9781452181752.

Reviewed by Gillian Hayward
Library Manager
Library and Information Services
Longwood Gardens

Erin Benzakein, founder of Floret Farm, is a passionate and extremely popular farmer-florist. As of this writing, Benzakein and Floret Farm have 798,000 followers on Instagram (@FloretFlower). In Washington's Skagit Valley (north of Seattle), the farm is at the forefront of the current local cut flower movement. Besides growing, designing with, and selling beautiful flowers, Benzakein is devoted to educating both home growers and other flower farm businesses about her growing and design practices. To that

end, she has written two well-received previous books: *Floret Farm's Cut Flower Garden: Grow, Harvest & Arrange Stunning Seasonal Blooms* (2017), and *Floret Farm's A Year in Flowers: Designing Gorgeous Arrangements for Every Season* (2020). Both books are packed with gorgeous photography of luscious, colorful blooms, and her third book, *Floret Farm's Discovering Dahlias: A Guide to Growing and Arranging Magnificent Blooms*, is no exception.



HYBRIDIZING

Dahlia breeders are passionate, competitive people who spend countless hours in their gardens trying to create the next big thing. Because of their patience and commitment, the world has been blessed with thousands of incredible varieties to grow and enjoy. Historically, most dahlia hybridizing has been done by the backyards of hobby gardeners who have

focused their efforts on creating varieties that will win awards at county shows. While the show world is fascinating in its own right, I've noticed that many of the award-winning dahlias do not necessarily fit the current style and what's in fashion with floral designers, flower farmers, and home gardeners these days.

Benzakein says that dahlias are her favorite flower to grow because of their huge variety of colors, forms, and sizes, their long growing season, and their ability to multiply rapidly. The Royal Horticultural Society, the International Cultivar Registration Authority for dahlias, lists over 20,000 registered varieties in their catalogue. Last year, the farm grew over 18,000 plants of nearly 800 varieties, so she has had a wide workshop in which to experiment and learn about her favorite flower's habits. In describing the diversity of available dahlias, Benzakein has adapted and simplified the American Dahlia Society's classification system and has included what she says are the most useful details of size, form, and color for

home gardeners, flower farmers, and floral designers.

Benzakein has a very personal writing style that makes clear she is human like the rest of us, learning from mistakes made along the way. The text draws in the reader because she so clearly demonstrates her passion and love for dahlias. With her enthusiasm, she may even convert previously unwilling growers to try their hand at dahlias (those that think that it is too much work to dig up the tubers each year). The clear and appealing photos (by her husband Chris Benzakein) and the book's design follow a formula carried over from her previous books that will surely appeal to Instagram fans of Floret Farm and many others. *Discovering Dahlias* is divided into several detailed sections: Understanding Dahlias; Growing and Care; Digging, Dividing and Storing; Advanced Techniques (propagation and hybridizing); Designing with Dahlias; and Variety Finder. Benzakein packs each section with good information, advice, and images that clearly illustrate what is being discussed. In the Advanced Techniques section, for example, 8 steps are listed for gathering seed, with a numbered photo illustrating each step.

The directory of dahlias in *Discovering Dahlias* contains 360 varieties, chosen "because of their beauty and versatility when arranging." They are grouped by color. Each variety within the color group contains a short description plus bloom size and flower form. A photograph is



'Chimacum Del Blomma'
FORM: Mini Ball
BLOOM SIZE: 2 to 3 1/2 in (5 to 9 cm)

Likely the darkest purple dahlia we grow, its blooms are striking in the garden. Medium-size plants with rich grape flowers are dazzling and ideal for market sales.



'Clearview Lila'
FORM: Stellar
BLOOM SIZE: 4 to 6 in (10 to 15 cm)

Pale petals with pointed tips and a great white eye form a domed shape that gives these blooms a multidimensional quality. Medium-size plants hold flowers on long, strong stems.



'Clifton Jondi' ♥
FORM: Formal Decorative
BLOOM SIZE: 4 to 6 in (10 to 15 cm)

Flowers start out a rosy pink and fade to cream with blue-purple tips that have a shimmering quality. Plants are on the shorter side.



'Crazy Cleere's' ♥
FORM: Mini Ball
BLOOM SIZE: 2 to 3 1/2 in (5 to 9 cm)

This beauty is one of the most productive mini balls that we grow on the farm. Plants are loaded with adorable pink-cream and lavender flowers. A great color combo and nice size for bouquets.



'Dad's Favorite'
FORM: Anemone
BLOOM SIZE: 5 to 13 cm

These purple flowers are unusual and eye-catching with their lovely dark violet petals and fuzzy-gold flecked centers. Plants produce long stems practically all season.




'Dancin' Queen'
FORM: Stellar
BLOOM SIZE: 7 in (18 cm)

Soft lilac blooms have white tips and pale petals toward the center that give flowers a frosted quality. Flowers are spread facing with ruffled petals.

VARIETY FINDER

included of every variety, held generously en masse by the author, posed similarly in every image (and in the same blue chambray shirt). These warm, artful images are a very pleasing and effective way to demonstrate the blooms' differences in color, form, and size. Other recent dahlia books are less effective in their directories, with either very few photos or mainly close-up photos of single flowers.

Benzakein clearly has expansive experience with, and passion for, dahlias. As a rising star in the floriculture world and social media, she may put readers in mind of Martha Stewart or Joanna Gaines (she does thank them both in the acknowledgments). Indeed, Gaines' new Magnolia TV network will feature a documentary about Floret Farm called *Growing Floret* (early 2021).

This review was based on an advance uncorrected proof. 

Sweet Peas in Worcestershire: Horticulturalist Hilda Hemus

By Judith M. Taylor

Originally posted on English Historical Fiction Authors (EHFA). Reprinted with permission of the author.

<https://englishhistoryauthors.blogspot.com/2019/05/sweet-peas-in-worcestershire.html>

This is a story about a family. Their name was Hemus. The action took place near the River Severn and the time was the turn of the twentieth century. Upton was a quiet town, surrounded by farms and it followed the country rhythms of its forebears. Thomas and Harriette Hemus had six children, four girls and two boys but it is with the second eldest daughter, Hilda, we are concerned.

Unlike so many fathers of the time, Thomas decided his daughters should be properly educated, not just taught by a simpering governess. The end of the nineteenth century was punctuated by scientific advances which challenged and excited the imagination. Perhaps nothing caused as much interest as genetics and the tantalizing new view of heredity.



Hilda Hemus

Thomas had bought a much larger farm to accommodate his growing family and every summer needed temporary help to bring in the harvest. One summer in 1899 Rowland Biffen rode his bicycle from his home in Cheltenham to Upton. He was a student at Emanuel College, Cambridge, but needed some extra money. His father, Rowland Biffen Sr., was a school master and very intellectual but not very well paid. It was up to young Rowland to seize every opportunity. Science was his passion and the idea of working on a farm with its crops was just the thing.

Thomas Hemus approved of the lad and allowed him to try a few experiments in the corner of a field. Rowland was able to see which type of wheat did best in the circumstances. Rowland also observed the

charming young women about him. Hilda had a striking personality and was really handsome. Two summers later he asked her to marry him, based on his success at Cambridge and high probability of becoming a don. (The possibility of a prosperous father-in-law contributed mightily to his passions.)

Hilda did not feel like marrying anyone and turned him down. Rowland was unfazed. He turned round and proposed to her elder sister Mary who was delighted with the offer. Exit Rowland and Mary for now.

Hilda had bigger ideas. The most fashionable flower of that epoch was the sweet pea. Grown for its fragrance since it first arrived in 1699 from Sicily, no one paid much attention to its appearance. That changed in the last part of the 19th century. Slowly and painstakingly James Carter developed new forms and colors and in 1865 received a first class certificate for them at the Royal Horticultural Society's Chelsea Flower Show. The world took notice.

She now knew what she wanted to do. She wanted to grow sweet peas as a crop and also try her hand at breeding new kinds. By this time her brother-in-law



Eveline Hemus

at Cambridge was a prominent agricultural geneticist. Both he and her sister used Mendelian methods to improve the sweet pea. Indeed Lady Mary Biffen won the Royal Horticultural Society's medal for Mendelian studies, submitting a set of new and improved sweet peas.

Hilda's father had bought a large fertile field, "Paradise," adjacent to the farm and gave her free rein. The name "Miss Hemus of Upton, Worcs" started to appear in the records of the National Sweet Pea Society and she won prizes at many regional flower shows in the north of England during the first decade of the twentieth century. There was a very long list of new cultivars of sweet pea with the prefix 'Paradise', meaning they came from Miss Hemus.

Then she won a first class certificate at the Chelsea Flower Show. That was very special, an exceptional achievement and it is now we have to introduce her younger sister Evelyn.

The sisters worked together in the sweet pea fields and Evelyn held the fort when Hilda had to go Har-



rogate or London for a show. Neither of the other two sisters contributed very much to the enterprise because they now had their own families. Their brothers were also involved with other matters.

Evelyn lacked Hilda's beauty and began to feel very resentful. On the one hand she was jealous of her sister Mary who now had a title and on the other had she believed her efforts were what kept the business going and that Hilda scooped up all the glittering baubles as if she had done everything herself. Things came to a head with this particular flower show.

By then Queen Victoria had died and Edward VIII was king. He awarded the prizes and shook Hilda's hand, maybe holding it just a shade longer than was considered proper. Everyone knew that Edward VIII had an eye for pretty women.

Sweet peas may be exquisitely pretty and fragrant but growing them on a large scale is every bit as hard labor as any other farm job. Soil had to be turned and fertilized, seeds planted, weeds pulled and then finally the crop harvested. The sisters needed men and horses for the heavy labor but

the women were in charge. That in itself was hard on Hilda and Evelyn. Early twentieth century Englishmen were not happy to take orders from women.

Evelyn's resentment boiled over. She stopped talking to Hilda and quit. They never spoke again. She wanted to be married and needed a larger pool of men than were available in a small provincial town to overcome her lack of looks. India was the place, full of lonely civil servants and soldiers just dying to marry an English woman. Evelyn found her husband on the ship going to India. The price of the passage paid off. When she had children she never told them she had a sister Hilda. Exit Evelyn.

Hilda was a very good businesswoman. She had met Sir Samuel Ryder at the Harrogate Flower Show and signed a contract to supply his seed company with sweet pea seed. Every amateur gardener in the British Isles worth his or her wellies grew sweet peas. Sir Samuel was a farsighted man. He put a few seeds into a pretty envelope and sold them for tuppence at unexpected shops like Woolworths. The tuppences added up over the years and Sir Samuel was able to endow the famous Ryder Cup for golf with the proceeds.

When World War I started things changed radically in Upton as in all the other English towns. Growing food was a priority. No one was allowed to use men and horses for mere flowers and anyhow, the men were called up and horses requisitioned. Hilda showed her mettle in this situation as in every other. She put all her fields into wheat and when German prisoners were billeted nearby, was one of the first farmers to use these gangs of prisoners. Raised eyebrows did not bother her.

She too married, a Major Ashworth, formerly of the quartermaster service and thus quite unscathed by the horrors of war. The conventions of time dictated that a married woman had no independent identity.

Whatever she had built up or accomplished was now attributed to the major. Miss Hemus of Upton vanished.

The Ashworths had one daughter, Jean. The whole family emigrated to New Zealand to enjoy a warmer climate a few years after the end of the war and settled in Napier. Jean married a surgeon who died while still quite young. She survived into her nineties and kept all her mother's records. She never heard from her Aunt Evelyn though her Aunt Mary sent her clothes and other gifts when she was still a little girl.

The Ashworths thus did not know that Aunt Evelyn, now Mrs. Fyfe, had also emigrated to New Zealand but to Wellington on the west coast. Hilda's daughter did not know she had cousins across the country. Evelyn's children did not know of their relatives in the eastern part.

Things might have stayed that way were it not for a busybody (the author) trying to learn more about the sweet peas. Enough of the family remained in Upton and were dimly aware of this ancient history to be a starting point. With a great deal of help and assistance from the Upton historian, Simon Wilkinson, this busybody made the connection and the two wings of the divided family came together in the third generation.

All hail to busybodies. 

CBHL Conference Collaboration Grant Program

During the 2010 mid-winter CBHL Board Meeting, the Board established a grant program to encourage CBHL members' participation in other like-minded organizations' conferences. Currently, there is already a wonderful reciprocal relationship with the European Botanical and Horticultural Libraries Group (EBHL). To expand collaboration, this "CBHL Conference Collaboration Grant" will pay up to \$500 towards conference fees (not including accommodations, travel expenses, or meals) for a CBHL member to go to the conferences of GardenComm (formerly Garden Writers Association), American Public Gardens Association, Special Libraries Association, Internet Librarian, or similar organizations.

The grantee would receive the funds before the meeting (up to \$500) with the agreement the participant would present a report to CBHL (either through the CBHL Newsletter or as a presentation at the Annual Meeting). The report should include useful aspects of the conference that will help other CBHL members. The report is intended as continuing education for the CBHL members. The grantee is also intended to serve as a CBHL ambassador to the conference and is required to register as the CBHL representative.

To receive the grant, the prospective grantee needs to submit a letter addressed to the CBHL Secretary including:

- Name of conference
- Date of conference
- Amount of grant request
- URL of the conference website
- Reason for choosing the conference, including the benefit to CBHL
- The date when you will submit your report about the conference to either the CBHL Newsletter or as a talk at the CBHL Annual Meeting

Please give the Board one month prior to the conference registration deadline to make a decision about the grant. Funding will be awarded based on the amount of funds made available by the Board during that particular fiscal year.

Submission address and/or email: CBHL Secretary, Esther Jackson, ([contact email available through LibGuides](#))

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Submissions are welcome according to the following schedule: March issue (copy due 1/15), June issue (copy due 4/15), September issue (copy due 7/15), and December issue (copy due 10/15). Articles may be submitted to Newsletter Editor Judy Stevenson, jstevenson@longwoodgardens.org. Newsletter team: Communications Committee Chair Meg Eastwood, meg.eastwood@du.edu, Editor Judy Stevenson, Proofreaders: Staci Catron, scatron@atlantahistorycenter.com, Jennie Oldfield, joldfield@atlantahistorycenter.com, Kathy Allen, kallen@umn.edu, and Jodi Shippee, jodi.shippee@gmail.com.

