

The Roots of the N.O.H.S.

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The Pacific Northwest urban and suburban areas are well known for their rare scenic beauty. But the pressures of urbanization threaten. Horticulture is one of the sciences best able to influence the urban environment through research and education on effective use of plants.

The Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society is keeping horticulture alive and active. It is the only independent horticultural society in the Pacific Northwest. It provides horticultural education programs for gardeners, landscape architects, nurserymen, and students. It provides financial support for scholarships, grants, and other horticultural endeavors. The Society has been a primary force in the initiation and establishment of the Center for Urban Horticulture at the University of Washington. This Center is the first academic program of research, teaching and continuing education in the United States on utilization of plants to maintain and enhance urban and suburban environments. This program has the potential of providing world leadership in urban horticulture, combining the unusually fine climate of the Puget Sound Basin for growing plants, a great research and teaching university in the midst of progressive urban centers, and the support of large and diverse horticultural and forestry industries and support organizations.

The NOHS is involved with the public planting of our thoroughfares and public parks. It serves as a consequential source of information and education on environmentally tolerant plant material--plants which are tolerant of air pollution and drought, are insect resistant and demand only minimum maintenance. The source of income is entirely from the private sector. The NOHS carries no significant operating costs since there is no office or employee expense. A percentage of the membership dues and lecture admissions covers printing and mailing costs. The membership has grown to nearly 700 entirely on its own merit with no membership drives. All responsibilities are carried by volunteers serving as board members or committee members. Participants in the production of our programs are not restricted to the members. In fact, we urge the involvement of non-members.

To date, the NOHS has contributed nearly \$150,000 for horticultural programs. At the age of fifteen years, NOHS has become recognized nationally as one of the most forward-thinking independent horticultural organizations in the United States. It has recently established a Horticultural Education Fund of \$100,000 to expand its educational program. The first solicitation drive has realized over \$50,000.

In addition, the NOHS has committed \$50,000 in support of the University of Washington Urban Horticultural Center. It has initiated a plan to provide seasonal color in Freeway Park with low maintenance perennials to avoid the high cost of planting and maintaining annuals. The Society has determined the plant material to be used, coordinating this effort with the City Park Department, and is promoting contributions of the \$70,000 cost of plant material. It is also currently developing and implementing a landscape plan for a Heritage Garden at the Museum of History and Industry in cooperation with the City, the University, and support Foundation.

Descriptions of other previous projects have been published nationally and have influenced other horticulturally oriented organizations to undertake similar programs and projects such as the Horticultural Education Fund and derivatives of the Horticultural Festival held in the metropolitan district of the city.

This is an impressive account but, from the human interest standpoint, it has been anything but easy to accomplish. The organization has weathered every conceivable kind of stumbling block. However, repetitions have been avoided, basic strength of purpose has endured and each achievement has served to inspire another.

Horticulture, incidentally, is a science closely related to biological science in dealing with the factors which influence plant life. Many horticulturists are primarily amateur gardeners who learn from their own experience as well as others, from plant societies and prominent plantsmen. There is considerable literature available authored by famed plant collectors and educators, not to mention the encyclopedias as a source of reference, as well as specialized academic courses offered by extension services, community colleges and universities as supplementary sources of education for the gardener. The technical plant sciences offer explanations of how plants respond to photo period and other environmental factors, how growth is controlled by hormones, and genetic control of plant responses. But for the gardeners there is no substitute for experience. The best teacher remains and always will be personal experience.

The NOHS was founded in 1966 by fifteen knowledgeable and dedicated horticulturists. In charting a course of activity, we were motivated by both national and international professional opinion that the Pacific Coastal Northwest has the potential of being the horticultural center of the world since our many microclimates permit us to grow a greater representation of plant material than any other single area of the United States and all of the world. Obviously, the door was open to prove it! And prove it we did:

In 1969 we staged a Horticultural Exhibit at the Pacific Science Center on the occasion of the 11th International Botanical Congress hosted by the College of Forestry, University of Washington. We featured plant specimens of the Ericaceae family,* exhibiting the largest representation from around the globe of this family grown in any single geographical area. The exhibit was awarded an Achievement Medal by the American Horticultural Society.

Dr. Henry T. Skinner, Director of U.S. National Arboretum and one of the national judges, expressed his opinion that the specimens exhibited were the finest to be grown anywhere. This was confirmed by a number of the delegates from 80 different nations and several of whom commented on seeing a species native to his own country which he had never seen before.

* considered by many the most ornamental of the woody plants and includes our famed Northwest rhododendrons and azaleas.

1972 brought us a number of awards and citations from national organizations as the result of undertaking another exhibit at the Pacific Science Center for the American Horticultural Society's Annual Congress. We also hosted this Congress and it was a herculean task! This time we aimed high, and the exhibit included a representation of nearly the whole plant kingdom excluding the tropical plants. The exhibit remained open an extra day for the benefit of the public.

In 1976 another idea, a Horticultural Festival with a subtitle, "Treasure our Earth," was conceived and developed entirely by the NOHS. It fell into place as an added feature of the bicentennial year "Juan de Fuca" celebration. \$15,000 was solicited from private sources and \$500 was contributed by the Downtown Seattle Businessmen's Association. We were responsible for involving all participants and exhibitors, the extensive organization involved, and both manning and staging the event. Over 100 volunteers participated. Educational exhibits, flower arrangements, and a plant sale were programmed by amateurs, public agencies and plant societies. It was effectively presented throughout Seattle--First National Bank and IBM buildings, Plymouth Congregational Church, and the Seattle Public Library. It was given repeated accolades by all news media and other local periodicals (i.e., "The Power of a Plant--as we watch the astute attorney cross the street carrying a briefcase in one hand and a pot with a trailing vine in the other and wearing a broad smile").

An enthusiastic plant sale committee ignored a caution to limit their stock to small take-home plants or suitable office inhabitants and provided a full-fledged sale geared for landscaping which created an astronomical task in returning or disposing of excess large plants. Regardless, a profit was realized, but only at the expense of an exhausted but wiser committee. This function won us the coveted Bulkley Medal Award from the Garden Club of America, with special commendation to an exhibit by the NOHS Study Groups.

As a result of these activities, a major bonus occurred. The NOHS created occasions for the eminent horticulturists brought to Seattle by the aforementioned events or as speakers for our lecture series to meet with the administrative officers of the University of Washington. They were able to effectively substantiate the need for a horticultural college at the University. Since there was no other source interested, the NOHS contributed \$37,000 for a schematic plan for such a development to be housed on the University's Union Bay property. This was a timely support, the University was receptive, and the concept is now a reality with the final plans properly stamped and approved. The Center for Urban Horticulture program is now established with Dr. Harold B. Tukey, Jr. as Director, who was judged the most eminently qualified in the U.S. for this position. The final step of development depends on the economy.

The NOHS has found it rewarding and of mutual benefit to coordinate our efforts with those of other plant societies. It also gives financial support to the many other horticultural organizations literally springing up around us, such as the Rhododendron Species Foundation and Portland's Rae Berry Garden, and carries supporting memberships with many local and national horticultural organizations. The more we are able to boost each other the greater the benefits are for all of us. In 1981, one of our contributions was \$1,000 to the University of St. Andrews in Scotland in support of the first field research expedition in 35 years to western Yunnan, China. In return, we received packets of seed of potential new plant introductions.

The NOHS coordinates its efforts with our small specialized plant societies by providing the circumstances for them to present demonstrations or lectures for interested gardeners. Many of these specialized societies consist of a small number of experts and are without the means to physically stage sizeable exhibits, demonstrations or present lectures. A widespread notification of such an occasion can also be channeled through NOHS. The members of these societies have a great deal to offer which is of tremendous value to the general gardener.

Now for the meat of our educational efforts, the NOHS Lecture Series as designed for you if you ever plant a plant. Do you know:

That if a plant likes morning sun and afternoon shade, it may not like morning shade and afternoon sun?

That root rot is a primary cause of plant mortality in the Northwest and commonly caused by poor drainage?

Why leaves curl or drop in cold or hot weather extremes?

How to prepare a planting site providing the essential needs in order that the plant can thrive on its own?

That Seattle is one of the few (if any other) major cities developed on glacial strata?

That to arrive at less maintenance, it is necessary to do more planning and thinking before planting?

What a species plant is?

That use of insecticides can upset the insect balance around a neighboring species plant if it has not been attacked?

If lichen, moss and fungi are harmful?

The Lecture Series is our means of covering all these subjects for the gardener's benefit.

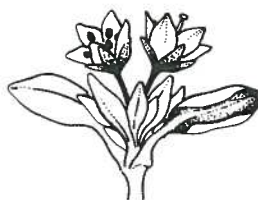
The NOHS feels strongly about providing additional services for its membership; thus, in 1979 a seed exchange was initiated. Emphasis was not placed on quantity, but quality, little known or grown, new or unusual natives or exotics. It was not the committee's desire to duplicate existing exchange schemes of other societies, but by extending the cut-off date for contributing seed to mid January, ours could accommodate those seed that ripen in November and December, too late for inclusion in other seed lists.

Growing plants can be a fascinating experience, mentally and physically challenging, and is an endless learning process. The NOHS tries to stimulate the interest of our gardeners and for this purpose publishes a quarterly journal, Horticulture Northwest. It has proven itself a tried and true gem. It has attracted a significant national and international support and drawn from equally representative sources for interesting horticultural articles.

For the moral and realistic support we have needed, we can look to our roster of a notable national representation serving as our advisors. On this score we are particularly indebted to Dr. Richard A. Howard, Director Emeritus, Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University.

"When the world wearies
and
Society ceases to satisfy
There is always the garden"

anonymous



Fabulosus Fashions Net \$4,554

The NOHS continuously programs fund raising events to support horticultural education and the University of Washington Center for Urban Horticulture.

Fabulosus Fashions was an enterprising idea in the form of a luncheon held at the Seattle Golf Club on March 11th, a brilliant, nippy, sunny day, when 250 women enjoyed the results of many months of planning for the gala event. It featured an exoticus, sculptus, revolutus, reversus, dissectus and elegantissimus fashion show. The wearing apparel was provided by John Doyle Bishop and presented under the direction of Jayne Keal, for many years coordinator of Seattle's notable fashion shows. The commentary sparkled as it was delivered by Bernie Caverly. During the social hour prior to luncheon, wearing apparel suitable for either the golf course or gardening from the Golf Club Pro-shop was modeled as well as Lesser Seattle gardening clothes from Marmot Mountain Works. The decor featured a pair of 1880 vintage mannequins amusingly gowned by David Adams, Florist.

The event was enthusiastically responded to and additional acknowledgments must be noted such as the hand printed invitations by Karen and Michael Maloney and Marili Boyd, a \$500 contribution from Molbak's Nursery, the models both professional and amateur, and the thirty-five patrons.

The individual talents of each of the experienced and capable committee members was fully exploited, namely Bernie Caverly and Betty Miller as co-chairmen assisted by Stephanie McGowan, Mariella Parks, Mary Fleming, Jo Hotson, Nancy Peterson, Sis Lea, Marili Boyd, Judy Addington and other NOHS members whose contributions enabled the event to flow with ease and to net \$4,554.



Horticulture Northwest

Journal of the Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society



Polystichum californicum

Volume 9

Number 2

Summer 1982