

FRIDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

September 11, 1970

RALPH SHUGERT. The moderator this afternoon was on the program committee and did an outstanding job; he is a gentleman who has been extremely active in our Society, currently serving as vice-president of the Western Region. He is a good friend and an outstanding educator with the University of California at Davis. Dr. Andrew Leiser. Andy, the afternoon is yours.

MODERATOR LEISER. As you have probably noticed by now the sessions this year are a little different from those in previous Western Region meetings and are different from the two or three Eastern Region meetings I have attended in the past. So, in this afternoon's session, in keeping with the trend of being different, we are devoting the full afternoon to a discussion of plants for the future. As moderator, I suppose it is my job to stage a little for the speakers that will follow, but I am not going to steal the thunder from any of them. I will not be talking about plants for the future but would like to review briefly the sources of our present day plant materials.

PLANTS FOR THE FUTURE

ANDREW T. LEISER, Moderator
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As moderator, it is my job to set the stage for the speakers who will follow. Therefore, I will not be talking about plants for the future but will briefly review the sources of our present plant palette.

Nurserymen come in all shapes, sizes and kinds. In this complex industry there is the back-yard gardener turned nurseryman, the second or third generation nurseryman, the business entrepreneur engaged in the profession as he might be in any business, and all combinations of these. This industry has many trade organizations at national and state levels. At the national level there are the American Association of Nurserymen, the Mail Order Association, the Plant Patent Owners and perhaps others. At the state level are many state associations.

But there is one organization that is unique, our International Plant Propagators' Society. It is unique in that it is truly an international organization. But more importantly it is unique because the membership is composed almost entirely of those who are true plantsmen — plantsmen in the best sense of the word — those who are

engaged in their work because they love plants. The concern of the members of this Society doesn't end with putting roots on a cutting or begin with having a saleable commodity. We are interested in the plants as plants and as objects which enrich our environment. We are interested in plants as things of beauty and of utility.

Of all the nursery-oriented organizations of which I am aware, none seems to have the broad spectrum of interest from propagation, through production, to sales as does this group. For example, the California Association of Nurserymen avoids propagation or production subjects in their annual meetings but concentrates on management problems, employee relations, business law, marketing, etc.

The International Plant Propagators' Society, however, has a broad interest covering most phases of the industry but primarily in plants, their propagation and production. This interest extends to the plants themselves, to new plants, in addition to our already rich plant palette. The Eastern Region has been particularly aware of this interest. The plant forum has been a regular part of their annual programs.

For this first international meeting, the program committee decided to make the "new plants" portion of the program a full half-day session. Let us look briefly at the source of our existing plant palette and then our speakers will discuss what is occurring now and what we might expect in the future. These talks will be followed by the new plant forum under the able direction of Al Fordham.

Where did our present plant palette come from?

Recognizing that in this brief introduction I must over-simplify and generalize, let us trace together the historical background from which our present rich plant lists arose.

As explorers from Europe discovered then unknown lands they brought back new plants from the four corners of the earth. It is fascinating to read books of 150 to 300 years ago and see the names of plants, new at that time to the gardens of Europe, which resulted from these explorations. Many of these are still among our most useful plants. From North America, for example, such plants as sweetgum, *Liquidambar styraciflua*; flowering dogwood, *Cornus florida*; and sugar maple, *Acer saccharum* were early introductions. Later as explorers moved west Douglas-fir, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*; Lawson's cypress, *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*; Oregon grape, *Mahonia aquifolium* and many others were added to the plant palette.

Later, expeditions were sent in search of plants suited to particular climates and uses and for particular genera. For example, the early 1900's saw much activity in southwest China searching for new *Rhododendron* species.

Another source of new plants has been the chance variations which have been found in the wild and in cultivation. These chance variations continue to be a source of new plants.

A third source of new plants has been the plant breeder. In the area of ornamental horticulture we have perhaps lagged behind other areas of horticulture and agronomy with the exception of certain plant groups such as iris, roses, rhodendrons, camellias and others.

These three sources of new plants, plant exploration, chance variation, and breeding will continue to be the ways in which we enrich our plant palette, but in new and exciting ways. Our speakers will now tell us of some of them.

MODERATOR LEISER. David Paterson, from Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, will now start our symposium, speaking on plant exploration. David Paterson:

PLANT EXPLORATION

DAVID B. PATERSON

Longwood Gardens

Kennett Square, Pennsylvania

If anyone had doubts as to the importance of the plant explorer to ornamental horticulture, a careful reading of the catalogs of nurseries, seed houses, and house plant growers would quickly dispel them. It is obvious that without their valuable work in introducing trees, shrubs, and flowering and foliage plants from all over the world, there would be no ornamental horticulture as we know it.

People have been bringing plants from one part of the world to another since the earliest days of civilization. The earliest recorded expedition specifically planned for plant hunting took place in 1495 BC before the establishment of Athens or Rome. Queen Hatshepsut of Egypt sent five ships to the Land of Punt (Somalia) to obtain living specimens of the tree which produces frankincense. Thirty-one living trees were brought back and established in the garden of the Temple of Amon at Thebes.

Sailors, soldiers, traders, and later missionaries and government officials often brought or sent home plants, both of economic and ornamental interest. Many of the explorers of the 17th and 18th centuries had naturalists accompany them on their adventures. Many collected specimens of animals, birds, and fish as well as plants. Sometimes the ships' doctor also carried on the naturalists' duties. In fact, often the botanical work was strictly an extra curricular