

Home and Garden

Early Days of California Spring Garden Show Recalled by 'Pioneer'

By ARTHUR E. NAVLET

On the eve of what has every promise of being the greatest of California Spring Garden Shows, those of us who were associated in its ambitious but very humble beginning enjoy a sense of satisfaction and pleasure that is indescribable. It is one thing to have grandiose plans—it is quite another to see them develop into something that far exceeds the original concept.

Some day, when I can find the time, I'll write the full story of the Garden Show, and in so doing, I hope to have the help of those who shared the early headaches, the disappointments, the joys and all the conflicting emotions one experiences in pioneering. Time has thus far taken but one of those who planned and labored so unselfishly in promoting the Garden Show idea, and he, Joseph Callaghan, was the "Daddy" or prime mover who converted words into action and accomplishment.

FIRST IN '29

Few know that the very first Garden Show was staged in 1929, jointly by the Alameda County Floral Society, and the Garden Club of Alameda County. Eugene Wells Sr., of the then Weaver-Studebaker agency located at 29th and Broadway, agreed to donate half of his showroom floor space for our first show.

This show was the "birth of a new idea" in horticultural shows, for in it, milk bottles and cut flowers on paper-covered saw-horse tables were given way to planting displays in natural garden style.

The organization meeting that was called at the residence of Mrs. Adeline Frederick, in Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, then secretary of the Garden Club of Alameda County, followed immediately after Wells donated part of his sales floor. Besides Mrs. Frederick, there were present, Harry M. Butterfield, Joseph L. Callaghan, Professor E. O. Essig, Professor Harry W. Shepherd, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Shulte, and L. Professor Shepherd asked George Kern, landscape architect, to design the show, and Marjorie Dobbins was asked to procure publicity.

We solicited cups and other trophies and received donations of money from merchants. The treasures of both the floral societies were also tapped to support the show. The show was a grand success and was acclaimed the show of the future. It was publicized as the "May Garden Festival" in April of 1929.

ENTHUSIASM MOUNTS

Spurred on by the success of the venture, to which no admission was charged, we became more ambitious and sought the co-operation of others.

In October of 1928, the birth of an idea, which has since spread over the Nation, took place. Harold Austin, Howard Gilkey, George Furniss and James Cobblethead so enjoyed lanching together and discussing gardening and flowers that they decided to invite others to join them. By fall of 1929, a year later, the "Snail Hunters" as they called themselves, grew to be the Oakland Business Men's Garden Club. There is now a national organization of Men's Garden Clubs which may hold its annual convention in Oakland in 1950. We interested the men's group in joining in with the result that Howard Gilkey, landscape architect with a great flare for showmanship, accepted the general chairmanship and agreed to de-

land, \$250 by the board of supervisors and \$15 by the Gardener's Union, free use of the Anthony building, lights and janitor service. Howard Gilkey designed a garden show that fitted perfectly into the handsome arched and terraced sales room. Tens of thousands recall it as one of the loveliest of all our garden shows. Nothing spectacular about it—just a beautiful interpretation of the garden show idea, that reflected the genius of Howard Gilkey, in making the very best possible use of the building itself as a setting for garden plots.

GET MORE SPACE

We sold them the idea of moving all but one or two cars off their sales floor and turning the entire space over to us. They shared our enthusiasm, and were very co-operative. Many names of people actively identified with floriculture and horticulture in Alameda County worked hard under the direction of Howard Gilkey, as general chairman and his most capable and efficient wife, Mrs. Elsie Gilkey.

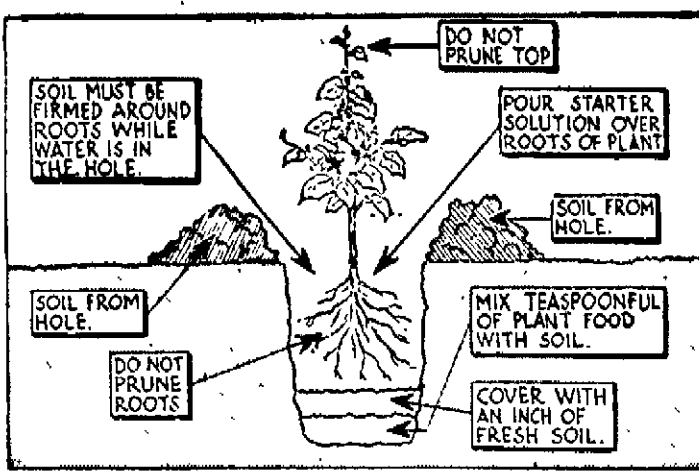
From a small handful who staged the first show, Gilkey surrounded himself with the following group of active workers: Finance committee chairman, Dr. E. F. Card assisted by Rudolph Bitterman, Joseph Callaghan and William Steinmetz; florists and William Steinmetz chairman, Arthur Navlet, assisted by Toichi Domoto; garden club participation committee chairman, Mrs. Alfred F. Shulte, assisted by Mrs. Grace Dyer, Miss Holton, and Mrs. Evans; labeling and nomenclature and scheduling committee chairman, Harry Butterfield, assisted by John W. Aitken; planning and staging committee chairman, Joseph L. Callaghan, assisted by George Budgen, Mrs. J. A. Scanavino, Mrs. A. F. Shulte, Mrs. G. A. B. Spencer, James Cobblethead, and Arthur Cobblethead; publicity committee chairman, William Steinmetz, assisted by H. D. McHolland, and Harold Austin; private estates committee chairman, John W. Aitken; institutions committee chairman, Ferdinand Hein, assisted by Abe Kleinow, Otto Brubaker and Mr. Nyquist; naming committee chairman, Mrs. J. A. Barrett, assisted by Arthur Navlet and John W. Aitken.

With \$500 pledged by the city commissioner of the City of Oak-

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Some 10,000 persons single-filed through the building on Sunday. They were admitted at Harrison Street entrance when space permitted inside, and ushered out the side exit on Hobart Street. Anyone who stopped but for a moment to admire a detail of a garden exhibit or flower group, was courteously asked to keep moving so all could see the show.

And, so went the forerunner shows to the present day California Spring Garden Shows which, along with the opera and symphony have contributed so much to establish this area as one where people seem to have the know-how of doing things a bit better. Each year as the garden shows in the final stages of construction reveal what the designer is attempting, there is a renewed enthusiasm that just can't be explained. This year, Ned Rucker, on his very first attempt at designing a show of major proportions, is proving without doubt that he too is a genius in garden showmanship—a quality, it seems, that can only be brought out with opportunity. He has a new and a fresh approach in theme design that is bound to carry the California Spring Garden Show to new heights in popular esteem. Whatever you do, don't let anything interfere with your seeing the show this year. There is plenty of space for a leisurely view of all parts of this great presentation.



NEW TRANSPLANTING METHOD SPEEDS UP PLANT GROWTH

When an amateur sets out a plant in his garden, he should not be in a hurry. A little more time, a little more care, will be more than repaid in the pride he may take in the quick recovery of his plants from transplanting shock, and the fact that his losses will be few, if any.

In the diagram above, the best methods of procedure as recommended by research scientists are illustrated. Transplanting is horticultural surgery, and so every step in this technique has been carefully tested. To prepare for transplanting the plants should be fed with liquid plant food a week before the operation. The day before, a starter solution should be prepared by hanging a cloth bag containing chemical plant food in a bucket of water and letting it soak overnight. Use 4 ounces of a 4-11-4 mixture or similar to each gallon of water.

Make a hole for the plant large and deep enough to hold its roots without crowding. Mix with soil at the bottom a teaspoonful of plant food, and cover this with soil. Set the plant in place, then pour into the hole, over the plant roots, 1/2 pint of starter solution. While the solution is in the hole, draw in the loose soil and firm it around the plant. The solution not only supplies nutrients but puddles the soil about the roots, making very close contact between soil and root and making it easy for the plant to take up water.

Roots of plants should not be pruned. In removing plants from pots, flats or seed beds, care should be taken to avoid breaking the root system. Replacement of lost roots must take place before the plant can grow very much. Tops of plants should not be pruned, as shown by research results. Pruning removes part of the "factory" which has to make the new plant material (carbohydrate)

upon which growth depends. Pruning is likely to take off more foliage than necessary. Dead or partly dead tissue does no harm, though wholly dead leaves may be picked off.

Shading is good practice where plants are succulent, when soil and air are dry and when sun is hot. But good plants can usually be set successfully without shade, especially if water or starter solution is used or if good contact between soil and root is established otherwise.

Ceramic Exhibit At Garden Show

Ceramic work suitable for flower arrangements will be found in the Mills College Ceramic Guild Exhibit at "California," the Spring Garden Show of 1949, which opens Tuesday at the Oakland Exposition Building, 10th and Fallon Streets. Original miniature sculptures will be shown in the display, according to Elena Netherby, a member of the group in charge of the exhibit. Others planning to show their work include Ruby O'Burke, Esther Fuller, Finner Fuller, Helen Mitchell, Josephine Mount, Bob and Nancy Clough, John and Jean Dowling, Edward Day, Marie Wilson, Jade Snow Wong, Antonio Prieto, Helen Gester, Edna Stoddard and Margaret Gupp. All are noted artists in their fields.



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Low House, Low Blooms

Landscape planting about a house should be a decoration, carefully planned to enhance the beauty of the building, completing an attractive picture as it is viewed from the street.

When tall trees dwarf the house, and over-large shrubs and evergreens hide it, and prevent the occupants from seeing out of the windows, the planting has not achieved its purpose.

Examples of such failures are frequently given by modern one-story homes planted with the shrubs and evergreens.

Only low growing plants should be planted in front of low homes; and the brightly colored annuals of dwarf habit are widely accepted as the most suitable plants for this purpose.

Their color gives a welcome touch, and they leave the view from windows unobstructed. Seed may be started early in seed-boxes indoors, and grown to a size suitable for transplanting by the time the soil can be prepared.

There are many varieties which will grow quickly from seed sown directly in the border where the plants are to grow, and they will bloom until freezing weather comes in the fall.

Annual poppies should be sown where they are to grow, and their seed may be broadcast whenever the soil can be loosened an inch or so deep with a rake. They stand freezing weather without injury.

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Oakland Tribune, Sunday, April 24, 1949 C-5 Special Garden Edition

The Tribune will publish a special section tomorrow devoted to the California Spring Garden Show which opens Tuesday at the Oakland Exposition Building. There will be special stories and features on the show. Be sure to watch for the garden edition in Monday's Tribune.

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