

# The Old Texas Rose

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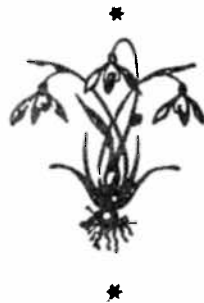
## STATE OF THE STATE

J Conrad Tips, VP Pub (Houston)  
Guest Editor for 1984

The state of the State has not been all that one could wish. A wretched summer gave way to a miserable winter and now the rainy season has set in. Here on the Upper Gulf Coast, we were visited by 109 successive hours of freezing temperatures, unheard of since records were first kept. The azaleas and camellias are seared black and the magnolias look mighty woe-begone. The camphor trees, which are not dependably hardy, appear to be badly damaged and the pessimists say that not a palm is left alive in the city, not Washingtonia robusta, which isn't, at any rate. The live oaks have not regained their composure. If all this was bad enough — and it was — I shudder to think of the tribulations of people and plants in less favored areas of Texas. We all know that the winter crops in the Valley have suffered, but had you heard that the satsuma industry in Brazoria County, long in decline, has been all but wiped out? Froberg's Strawberry Farm, near Alvin, and Jamison's Home Cannery, between Pearland and Friendswood, are the last commercial growers of the sweet little fruit, which is not found in quantity for market in any other part of the State. And to try our souls just a bit more, health officials report that oranges and grapefruit trucked in from Mexico are tainted with ethylene dibromide. In use for 35 years as a pesticide and as a fumigant for cereals, EDB was banned by William Ruckelshaus in 1983. The ban had not yet been effected, however, due to protests by growers. On the brighter side, testing of fish from six major waterways has turned up no traces of the deadly dioxin. Which is nice to know and it's nice to know, too, that there are fish left alive to test. The Parks and Wildlife Department announced last week that 15.2 million fish, shrimp, and crabs died during December. Who counted? I cannot regret the death of 1983 and the insurance companies must be on

their knees in prayerful gratitude to see the end of it. Of all the catastrophic incidents of weather in the country, the worst occurred here. Property losses may reach one billion dollars. Still, the grass seems to be greening a little and the daylilies are sprouting, which may be unwise, and Old Blush China just keeps on keeping on.

O ye Winds of God,  
 O ye Fire and Heat,  
 O ye Winter and Summer, bless ye the Lord,  
 praise Him and magnify Him forever.  
 O ye Dews and Frosts,  
 O ye Frost and Cold,  
 O ye Ice and Snow, bless ye the Lord;  
 praise Him and magnify Him forever.  
 O let the Earth bless the Lord; yea let it  
 praise Him and magnify Him forever.

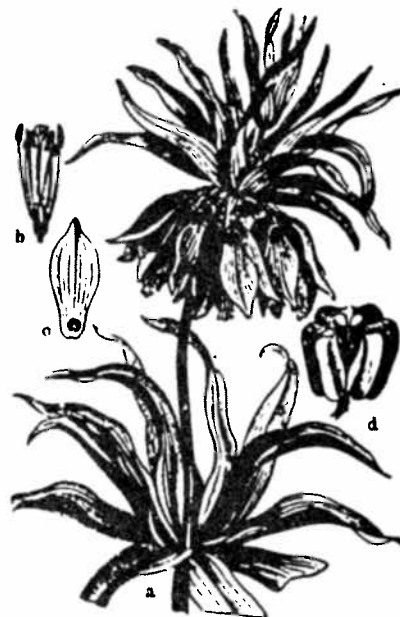


The illustrations reproduced in this issue of The Old Texas Rose are taken from Hilderic Friend, Flowers and Flower Lore, 1884, an exhaustive work which has no rival. Fortunately, the book has been recently reissued in one volume with paper covers by Bara Research, Inc., Whistlestop Mall, Rockport, Massachusetts 01966.



FOXGLOVE (*Digitalis purpurea*).

a, b, plant; c, corolla (in section); d, calyx and pistil; e, f, sections of fruit.



CROWN IMPERIAL (*Fritillaria imperialis*).

a, plant; b, anthers and stamens; c, petal;  
 d, fruit capsule.

A word of unknown origin, possibly from the French, meaning: a dish made by hashing up odds and ends of food; a confused jumble; a promiscuous assemblage (of persons); a man of many accomplishments; a ridiculous medley; a miscellany.

Two fairly new magazines of note: Texas Gardener, P.O. Box 9005, Waco 76714, fruits, vegetables, and ornamentals; Garden Design, a quarterly published by the American Society of Landscape Architects, 1190 East Broadway, Louisville, Kentucky 40204; the new Caswell-Massey catalogue has arrived. Do you require herbal baths, scented soaps, General Washington's and Dolley Madison's favorite fragrances, oils, essences, potpourri, pomanders, and toothbrushes of distinction? Write Caswell-Massey Co. Ltd., 111 Eighth Avenue, New York 10011; it is true that Hilltop Herb Farm was hit by a tornado, but the place is recovering nicely, thank you, and a Houston outlet has recently opened at 10001 Westheimer Road; Mrs. Dobson's Combined Rose List 1984 is ready for mailing. If you want one, get it now; they go fast. Write Beverly R. Dobson, 215 Harriman Road, Irvington, New York 10533. The List is \$5.00 postpaid and Mrs. Dobson's Rose Letter is \$5.00 a year; have you joined The Garden Book Club? The prospectus is reasonably mouth-watering and includes several of Miss Jekyll's books as edited by G.S. Thomas, Mrs. Verrey's The Scented Garden, the new edition of Russell Page's The Education of a Gardener, C.E. Lucas Phillips' Ornamental Shrubs ... need I say more? Write for information to The Garden Book Club, 250 West 57th Street, New York 10107; again this year, the Houston Parks Department gave away seedling pines and palms; ReLeaf Houston, which began its operation last December, is a one-year attempt to plant 20,000 trees in city parks to replace those downed by Hurricane Alicia; for the fifth year running, volunteers have collected and staked out discarded Christmas trees on southeast Texas beaches to help maintain and rebuild the dunes; a new series of books focusing on southwestern culture will be published jointly by the Texas A&M University Press and Tarleton State University at Stephenville. The series will feature books on various aspects of southwestern literature and art; I read in the paper that the string we've all been pulling for the last 90 years to open the Quaker Oats box is to be replaced by a tape. Modernity stinks; veterinary surgeons at College Station have announced that the baby pigmy sperm whale which stranded itself on Galveston beach recently died of an inflammation brought on by swallowing a quantity of plastic bags; the American Institute of Wine and Food, an international scholarly organization formed to promote gastronomy as a cultural force, produces a newsletter of great interest, including information about sources for unusual vegetables and herbs. Write the Institute at 655 Sutter Street, San Francisco, California 94102; Rice University has been moving mature live oaks with the assistance of the world's largest all-hydraulic tree digger. The interesting mechanism is now in Austin, saving a number of large trees in the Capitol grounds from destruction; Geo. W. Park Seed Co. is sending its wares into space again, this time for a full year. Seed will then be sent to science classrooms around the nation so that students may determine if the genetic structure or ability to germinate was affected; Mrs. Lyndon Johnson, speaking recently to a Houston audience, urges all Texans to support the work of her National Wildflower Research Center. The Center, located on 60 acres of land near Austin, has acquired a staff, a laboratory, and a number of test plots have been planted. Apart from the obvious joys afforded by the use of our native flora, Mrs. Johnson observes that great economies are possible, an estimated 24 million dollars a year in mowing costs alone; Harris County Sheriff Jack Heard announced recently that his mounted

patrol has been so successful that he plans to expand it to the downtown shopping centers of Houston year-round, and where there are horses "improvement" must abound. This was my great-grandmother Rather's man-of-all-work's genteel word for manure. Pooper-scoopers, anyone?; I read that Dallas is soon to have a new arboretum and botanical garden. Can our friends to the north tell us more?; Deanna Carroll of Canton writes that she is besieged fore and aft by gophers and it's giving her palpitations. Does anyone know a remedy?; the exhibition of Atget's photographs of the old parks and gardens of France at Houston's Museum of Fine Arts has closed, but several fine posters are still available. A catalogue, one of a series devoted to his work, will be published by the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Blaffer Gallery at the University of Houston is showing the work of Hermann Lungkwitz, an academically-trained German artist of the 19th century who recorded the Hill Country at it appeared circa 1850-1890. A catalogue will be published by the University of Texas Press; does anyone have a receipt for watermelon wine?; the Indian Cling, a choice peach for cooking and much grown in East Texas when I was a boy, may be had from Patrick's, Pomegranate Blvd., TyTy, Georgia 31795. Many rare fruits and ornamentals especially bred for use in Southern gardens are available from Mr. Patrick.



#### NOTES FROM THE HONORABLE EDITRIX

Mrs. Raymond "Sis" Regmund of Kenedy reports that she has had good luck with her fall collecting. She has a probable "Mrs. Dudley Cross" — the cream tea with the blush edges; and a white quartered rose that resembles "Mme. Hardy" but lacks the green eye. Her third unknown is a large bright pink with a loose bloom; petals quill reversely....Of the intriguing unknowns I have heard of, I can hardly wait to see Renz's Gay Hill Climber, a once-blooming peppermint stripe; Tom Adams' dark cupped maroon climber, scouted in Seguin in the late fall....Mr. Robert Basye of Caldwell gave Dr. Welch an interesting cross of his own: R. rugosa rubra X R. foliosa, a native Texan, viz. the Leafy Rose. This blooms in a very true hue of purple and is totally disease-resistant for him....Barbara Christopher, Redouté Roses Iron-On Transfer Patterns, and Louise Beebe Wilder, The Fragrant Garden: A Book About Sweet Scented Flowers and Leaves, both from Dover Publications, Inc., 180 Varick Street, New York 10014.



The Rose is a plant that so readily adapts itself to the purposes for which for which it is required that it is not difficult to induce it to associate agreeably with other plants, and one of its most suitable companions is the Clematis. Whether it be the early *C. montana* or the snowy *C. flammula* that

is closely associated with the Ayrshire, Boursault, Banksian, or sempervirens Rose, trailing over the cottage porch, the rusting fence, the rugged rootery, or up the tree and leafless branches of some forest tree, or where they are even still more beautiful, rambling at will in unrestricted luxuriance in the wild or woodland garden; or whether it be the deep violet-tinted C. Jackmani or one of its similarly coloured descendants intermingling with Marechal Niel, straggling over the sunny half-ruined wall, the effect is invariably pleasing; but when seen as an appropriate edging, as a carpet or groundwork to dwarf, thinly-planted, pegged-down Rose beds, the appearance is, if possible, even still more beautiful. A mass of the Souvenir de la Malmaison Rose in full flower with an edging of C. lanuginosa, a few shoots creeping carelessly over the bare soil underneath, and occasionally entwining themselves round a casual shoot of its more sturdy companion, exposing on all sides its marvellous star-like coerulean blooms in sweet harmony with the delicate blush of the Roses overhead, is a sight worth seeing. The crimson Charles Lefebvre, too, in full vigor and bloom, surrounded and carpeted by the beautiful C. lanuginosa candida, with its numerous satiny white stars, makes when planted together in a bed a pleasing contrast; or the good old Gloire de Dijon, clothed in all its inimitable beauty, associated with the deep mauve-coloured C. Mrs. Hope produces an equally good effect.

The Garden, 27 October 1883.



WILD ROSE (*Rosa canina*).

a, spray of blossom; b, section of blossom;  
c, seed; d, section of same.



WHITE LILY (*Lilium candidum*).

a, blossoms; b, bulb with roots.

#### ANECDOTAGE

The priest said to Captain Edward Croker on his deathbed, "Ah! Sir, it is a far, far better place that you go to now." Captain Croker, sitting up in bed, surveyed his wondrous domain through the window, replied, "I doubt it," and fell back dead.

Duncan McLaren, In Ruins: The Once Great Houses of Ireland, 1980.



PANSY (*Viola tricolor*).  
a, b, plant; c, anthers and stamen.



COWSLIP (*Primula veris*)  
a, plant; b, calyx; c, corolla; d, corolla open;  
e, pistil; f, seed capsule (burst open).

#### ADVICE TO THE IDLE

And if Gentlemen which have little else to doe, would be ruled by me, I would advise them to spend their spare time in their Gardens; either in digging, setting, weeding, or the like, than which there is no better way in the world to preserve helth. If a man want an Appetite to his Victuals, the smell of the Earth new turned up, by digging with a Spade will procure it, and if he be inclined to a Consumption it will recover him.

Gentlewomen if the ground be not too wet, may doe themselves much good by Kneeling upon a Cushion and weeding. And thus both sexes might divert themselves from Idleness and evill Company, which often times prove the ruine of many ingenious people. But perhaps they may thinke it a disparagement to the condition they are in; truly none at all, if it were but put in practice: For we see that those fashions which sometimes seem ridiculous, if once taken up by the Gentry cease to be so.

William Coles, The Art of Simpling, 1656.



Not going to England this year? Then find a copy of The Englishwoman's Garden — almost as good and much cheaper. The editors have had the inspired notion of inviting 36 of their acquaintance to chat, quite informally, about their avocation and the results have been illustrated very handsomely indeed with numbers of excellent color photographs. The ladies all are literate and the gardens are very grand and rather humble, cottage-style and Olde Englyshe Picturesque, specialized and flowery-bowery. The gamut is run and the variations are well-nigh endless, but one impulse I notice throughout. As Dr. Strong remarks, "The art of the garden, like the other arts, goes back in order to go forward." There is no interest here in the landscape style of the 18th century; rather, a return to the formal manner of the Tudors and the Stuarts and its revival in modern times by Miss Jekyll and Edwin Lutyens, in which the architectural forms of the Renaissance are married to the close planting of the cottage garden. To quote Dr. Strong again, "All garden design is an index of the ideals of the society which created them. They mirror exactly as the other arts, the tensions and problems of an age." Very true, no doubt — who, after all, am I to argue with a director of the Victoria and Albert Museum? — and what, then, are we to deduce? A determined flight from the rigors of the late 20th century, I expect, and who can wonder. Nothing in this vale is perfect, of course — I am sorry that the late Mrs. Fish's garden at East Lambrook is not shown. It seems to me the perfection of what can be done on a small scale in a fairly ordinary suburban situation with an uninteresting piece of land, if one has got taste, wit, and knowledge. But here is Cranborne, Kiftsgate, Little Hasley, Ednaston, Barnsley House, Rodmorton Manor — not a bad bag.

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Mrs. Lees-Milne and Mrs. Verey both have written extensively for the horticultural press. Mrs. Verey's column appears monthly in Country Life and in 1981 her new book, The Scented Garden, was published by Michael Joseph. Her garden is illustrated in The Englishwoman's Garden — she practices what she preaches. Dr. Strong's authoritative study, The Renaissance Garden in England, was published by Thames and Hudson in 1979. About Mrs. Fish: her books have been difficult to find of late years, though worth looking for, but hope springs eternal and is sometimes rewarded — Faber & Faber of Boston has reprinted the entire series of eight titles in hard- and soft-cover both. The curious reader should begin with We Made A Garden and then, perhaps, progress to Cottage Garden Flowers. Mrs. Fish did not precisely abhor modern introductions — she made use of anything for which she could find a use — but her heart was captivated by the flora of the old English herbalists and of John Gerard, John Parkinson, and the Tradescants in particular. Design, not her great interest, was secondary to plantsmanship but East Lambrook was a dream of beauty and still is. Happily, Mrs. Fish's heirs have been careful to preserve her work. I cannot resist the temptation to quote from We Made A Garden — I never resist, it's part of my breathless charm — and the passages below are fortuitously apt just here.

I have never been able to work up much enthusiasm for rose gardens, as such, as there always seems to be something artificial and stilted about them. The happiest rose garden I have ever seen is at Cranbourne. Surrounded by lovely old pink brick walls the roses are grown in rather narrow beds with

little brick paths between them, and instead of the usual, formal raised beds, here the roses are grown practically level with the paths. When I saw them they were cozily muffled in the straw from generous mulchings of farmyard manure, and I have never seen roses looking more satisfied and comfortable....Old-fashioned and species roses have certainly come back to stay, but I do wish their proud owners would plant them singly and not lump them together like a shrubbery. Planted in a mass they lose all charm and individuality. They just get big and untidy and loll against each other, whereas a single specimen at the back of a border or against a wall is a thing of beauty. Cranbourne also gives me a lesson in how to grow old roses. Here they are planted in a narrow bed in the middle of a long narrow garden, with borders on both sides. There is grass on each side of the old roses and it is pleasant to stroll along and take in their beauty.



BLACK HELLEBORE (*Helleborus niger*).

a, plant in blossom; b, leaf; c, tubular petal; d, capsules.

The Englishman's Garden. Edited by Alvilde Lees-Milne and Rosemary Verey, with a Foreword by the Marchioness of Salisbury. Boston: David Godine, 1983.

When I reviewed Mrs. Lees-Milne's and Mrs. Verey's first effort, I expressed a hope to our Honorable Editrix that they would not prove sexist. Well, they didn't and the format is much the same. The editors have invited 33 persons of the masculine persuasion to chat about Man's second favorite hobby. Some of their subjects are very well-known indeed — G.S. Thomas, the late Beverley Nichols, Sir Frederick Ashton — and others are unknown to fame, or at least to me. The volume is handsomely produced, with many fine color plates, and the tone is optimistic. Now, the burning question of the moment is this: how do the gardens of men and women differ? The editors find a great dissimilarity in approach, however united the sexes may be in a love of plants and a desire to create surroundings both beautiful and interesting. To summarize, men are rather less inclined toward improvisation, they are more practical and less theoretical, they are more serious. On the



other hand, "the final result may not necessarily be any better" — so there, chauvinist swine. And what do I think? Well, I think I am strongly reminded of the old Frank R. Stockton tale about the poor beast who was forced to choose between the lady and the tiger, and I think I don't want to, not today.

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"I'm afraid I must give in my notice, Sir," said the much-valued head gardener to his boss. "Oh dear, oh dear, what can have happened?" "Well, Sir, I have been very rude to her Ladyship. I called her an interfering old bitch." Mr X replied, "Oh, you don't want to bother about that."

Lord De Ramsey, The Englishman's Garden.

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CARNATION.

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In 1976, Historians began excavations at Monticello to determine the design of the original gardens, in particular the kitchen garden, the vineyard, the orchard, and the grove. Mr. Jefferson collected plants from all over the world, some of which still survive and are in commerce. These have been procured and seed is carefully harvested each year for sale. A list is available. Write the Monticello Gift Shop, Box 316, Charlottesville, Virginia 22902. Please enclose a stamped and self-addressed envelope. Twenty-eight varieties of flowers, herbs, and vegetables are offered.

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David Hicks. Garden Design. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982.

If you like, as I do, flowery cottage gardens, you may hate Mr. Hicks' new book. But if you like, as I do, a firm outline, a tidy hedge, and a nice deployment of well-chosen and suitably placed ornaments — if you like, that is, an architectural and mostly green garden, this is for you. Mr. Hicks' taste in these matters is a bit austere, perhaps; most of us rather yearn after a little embroidery here and there, along with our pleached allées, our terraces and urns and pieces of water. Mr. Hicks would find us a bit low, I'm afraid; never mind, he shows a number of fine gardens which combine architectural design with lavish planting. Could one ask for more? Sissinghurst and Hidcote, the two most influential gardens of our time, are featured, as well as many other superb British and continental places, and Mr.

Hicks plots for us his new garden. It sounds very promising indeed. Is nothing ever perfect in this vale? Well, hardly ever. Mr. Hicks is unduly fond of the personal pronoun. One would scarcely guess that he shares his life with a consort — Lady Pamela, the daughter of Mountbatten of Burma, is allowed curiously little say in the arrangement of her house or her garden, poor soul. Too, the reader could do with fewer pictures of the author. Speaking of which, the book is illustrated with Mr. Hicks' photographs, not quite his finest achievement. Many are strikingly underdeveloped and the plates have a distinctly offish tone. But which of us is without fault? This is a gorgeous glut of English (and other) gardens and we must forgive Mr. Hicks' little vagaries. He has written a serious treatise on style, a quality which we must all respect. And, too, you see, Mr. Hicks is a great lover of the old roses.

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Eleanor Perényi. Green Thoughts: A Writer in the Garden. New York: Random House 1981.

The good witch of Stonington, Connecticut! I couldn't resist that and it may well be true, for as Mrs. Perényi writes, "Already, I am something of a freak in the community on account of my vegetables, herbs and fruits. I foresee the day when I graduate from freak to witch." Well, her intelligence is as robust as her figure and I rather imagine she's keenly anticipating the transformation. I recognize a naughty twinkle in a lady's eye when I see it. Eleanor Spencer Stone Perényi has seen something of the world. As the daughter of an American naval officer, she lived as a child in Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, and various parts of the United States, and she kept her eyes open every minute, the clever puss. At 19, she married Baron Zsigmond Perényi and went to live in Hungary, in a large and draughty castle set in a large and gloomy park, just downwind of the Carpathians. Her new home lacked the modern conveniences to a remarkable degree — was she downhearted? No! She made a garden.

Like Elizabeth in her German garden, of whom I often thought, I was up against a tradition that was totally opposed to — indeed had never heard of — the wife of the Herr Baron grubbing among the flower beds. English duchesses may cover themselves with dirt and lose their diamond rings among the peonies. In central and eastern Europe such conduct was excused only if one was a foreigner, and then only barely.

But over the mountains, she heard the first cannonades of the invasion of Poland. Back in America, Mrs. Perényi wrote and worked in publishing. And she found a new garden on the Connecticut shore, a cottage garden, New England style. A little bit of everything on less than an acre of land about an 18th-century house and not much like a castle in Hungary, but if one has a taste for white picket fences and antique roses, fresh vegetables and pungent herbs, lilacs, grape arbors, fruit trees, trim hedges, and rich compost? So. What do you want to know about tree houses, toads, magio? Feminism and

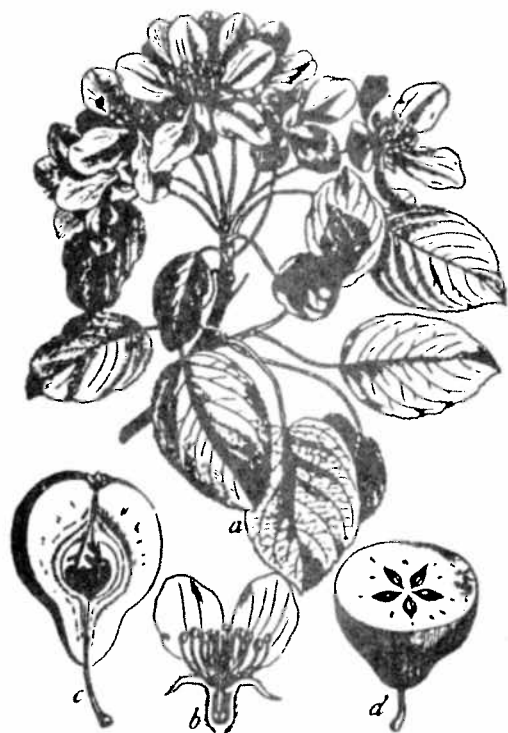
the garden? Jerome Rodale, Henry James, and the unspeakable Miss Mapp? Do you require an infallible receipt for coping with mazes? Do you know the best way to grow privet, pittosporum, ligustrum? Mrs. Perényi does and will happily open her mind to you. A well-furnished mind it is, too, aphoristic and cultivated. Her manner is ironic, her quotations superb, and she is not at all inclined toward sweet sentiment:

Thoreau has always struck me as an exhibitionist, a thoroughly unsympathetic character who thought he was more original than he was. The fact is that most of his fellow-countrymen agreed with him, which is one of the reasons for the slovenliness of the American backyard.

A woman of parts, obviously, but not a very cheerful woman. She fears for the state of the world and the state of gardening in this country and is far from happy about pesticides, American seed companies, ignorance, greed, sloth, and apathy:

Our time has been compared to the fourteenth century, wrongly I think, because we aren't emerging from a dark age but are perhaps about to enter one....like most people I can't really accept doomsday. The slow-motion collapse of the technological structure that supports us is easier to visualize: a world in which the few of us who know how would be planting vegetables, chopping wood and raising chickens among the ruins....Some days, I look at my garden and wonder if it will turn out to be the last ditch, if not for me then for the next occupants....we should write down what we know, not for the computer but for another human being.

It must be all too obvious that I could quote Mrs. Perényi forever, so I won't. Read for yourself.



PEAR (*Pyrus communis*).

a, blossom; b, section of same; c, d, sections of fruit.



STRAWBERRY (*Fragaria vesca*).

a, plant, with runners; b, ripe fruit; c, section of fruit.

Does anybody here know Georgia? Georgia Torrey Drennan, that, is, the author of Everblooming Roses for the Outdoor Garden of the Amateur. All Southern gardeners should. Thanks to the Library of Congress, I recently learned that Mrs. Drennan wrote a series of magazine articles circa 1910-1920 and if any member would like a set I will be happy to order copies. I don't know how many pages there will be, nor the subject matter exactly. The essays concern plants suitable for cultivation in Southern gardens. As for the cost and the postage, five dollars ought to do it nicely. And now, a sample:

With his watering cart, every summer evening, Uncle Solomon went up and down the carriage drive and garden walks, sprinkling and keeping them cool and dewy. The grass was moist and green; mockingbirds sang from the Cherokee hedges; the gay and the valiant of the popular roses of that day, Cloth of Gold, Baltimore Belle, Giant of Battles, Glory of France, Damask and Triumph of Luxemburg, held ponderous heads above moisture-laden foliage, bloomed their royal best and shed perfume on the humid air; from cool and dewy borders, ten thousand flowers turned bright faces to the sky, and overhead, magnolias bloomed.

Georgia Torrey Drennan, Everblooming Roses, 1912.

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And now, your humble, obliged, and temporary editor puts aside his pen in hope that his efforts have pleased. But he begs leave to remind the Worshipful Company that a newsletter cannot be printed unless there is something to print in it. Please direct contributions (soon!) to Conrad Tips, 1007 Highland Street, Houston 77009.



SAGE (*Salvia officinalis*).

a, plant; b, blossom; c, corolla, open.