



THE GARDEN GATE

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Newsletter of the Beatrix Farrand Association

Fall 2006



Beatrix Goes to the Fair

In August, the Beatrix Farrand Garden Association entered a horticultural exhibit in the 161st Dutchess County Fair in Rhinebeck, New York, and thus entered the ranks of the Vanderbilts and Astors. The Dutchess County Fair is the second largest agricultural event in the State, and there was a rich tradition of local estates entering the various competitions for horticulture and livestock. Even better than following in history's footsteps, our exhibit won a ribbon!

The Beatrix Farrand Garden was chosen to represent the Great Estates Consortium, an association of the major historic sites in the region including Locust Grove, the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt/Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Val-Kill, the Vanderbilt Mansion, Staatsburgh, Montgomery Place, Wilderstein, Clermont and Olana. The theme of this year's horticultural exhibits at the Fair was "The Secret Garden," so it was felt that the Farrand Garden, long secret behind its stone walls, was a perfect subject for the display.

Through a great deal of planning and teamwork, we turned our 8'x10' space into a wonderful evocation of our Bellefield garden. Led by Kate Kerin and Anne Symmes, the design was created, and, on Friday morning before the

fair a team worked the day through to make it a reality. Staff from the National Park Service and Adams Nursery, as well as several fellow exhibitors, helped mightily. I brought plastic sheeting which underlaid the display to make our clean up tasks easier. The National Park Service donated mulch. Mandy Landscaping of Pleasant Valley donated sod. Adams Nursery loaned us ten large *Arborvitae* to simulate our hemlock hedge, as well as a range of perennials selected by Anne Symmes and her mother, Jane Symmes. Cynthia Witman created beautiful rustic labels for the plants, and Helen Page, a superb calligrapher, carefully wrote out each botanical name. I brought pea gravel for the paths, which Doris Adams lined with her collection of old bricks. Helen Page lent a 19th century watering can, which gave an authentic touch to the display.

The greatest thanks and praise goes to Andrea Bowen and Lenny Miller. Lenny is a Rhinebeck-based carpenter who has long been involved with the Dutchess County Fair and 4-H clubs. His wife, Melodye, is the site manager at Staatsburgh (the Mills Mansion), and thus part of the Great Estates Consortium. She was kind enough to share her talented husband with us for this endeavor. Lenny built the wall that held one of the actual Farrand-designed gates from our garden, and provided invaluable assistance during the installation of our display.

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Two Featured Fall Beauties at Bellefield

By Anne Symmes, Horticulturist



Lilium brownii, a lovely lily seldom seen in American gardens, is listed on Beatrix Farrand's plant list for the cream, blush and grey border. Its large white trumpet shaped blossom, which opens late, even into October, has a pure white interior with striking anthers, and a shaded pale purple exterior. While these lily bulbs are commonly used in Chinese

herbal medicine acting as a diuretic and anti-inflammatory (a yin deficiency tonic), they are not easy to find in a nursery. In fact, we now have them blooming in the garden because my mother Jane Symmes dug them out of her garden in Madison, Georgia and brought them up to us in the trunk of her car. They are vigorous and multiply readily and with some luck in a few years we will be featuring them in our spring plant sale.

Anemone x hybrida 'Honorine Jobert' is a fall blooming, pure white, 4 to 5 foot tall anemone which seems to reach record heights in the garden at Bellefield. It thrives in partial shade and blooms even later than the pink varieties such as *Anemone hupehensis*. The shade in our white border causes the tall, heavy blooms to flop around a bit, but we help them up with a few stakes and forgive them because they flop in a charming way dropping white petals that look like snow along the paths. They spread stoloniferously, forming new plants every season, but are less vigorous spreaders than the pink varieties. Look for these delightful plants at our plant sale this coming spring.



Save the Date: 2007 Bellefield Design Lecture

Please join us on Tuesday, June 9, 2007 to celebrate Beatrix Farrand's 135th birthday at the second Bellefield Design Lecture. It is with great pleasure that we announce next year's speaker: Gail Collmann Griffin. Ms. Griffin has been the Director of Gardens at Dumbarton Oaks, in Georgetown, for the past decade, supervising the maintenance of this 16-acre garden designed by Beatrix Farrand for Mildred and Robert Bliss from 1921 to 1945. Ms. Griffin will discuss Farrand's vision and long-term work at this landmark American garden.

A sprawling country estate in the heart of our nation's capitol, Dumbarton Oaks is widely considered one of the great gardens of the world. Now owned by Harvard University, it is a renowned study center for Byzantine, Pre-Columbian and Landscape scholars. In addition, the gardens and portions of the Blisses' varied collections are open to the public. For more information about this lecture, please visit www.beatrixfarrandgarden.org. For more information about Dumbarton Oaks, please visit www.doaks.org.



This is the logo created by Frank Futral, Curator, NPS, for our Bellefield Design Lectures. The image is a detail from the spectacular hand-blocked Zuber wallpaper that adorns the two-story stairwell at Bellefield.

Three Cheers and A Million Thanks

Susan Devereux—a past president of the Beatrix Farrand Garden Association as well as a tireless volunteer at Bellefield and elsewhere in the community—has just moved to North Carolina with her husband, Dennis. Her contributions to our garden and to the cheerful spirits of BFGA volunteers are immeasurable. We wish Susan every happiness in her new life as a southern belle, and can't wait to see her back in the Farrand garden whenever she is able.

Bellefield Design Lectures: A Local Collaboration

This spring, the Beatrix Farrand Garden Association was joined by the National Park Service and the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, as well as the Hyde Park Historical Association and the Hyde Park Visual Environment Committee, to inaugurate a series of annual lectures on design. The Bellefield Design Lectures represent a strong new collaboration between groups that are united by a focus on the rich history of Hyde Park, New York, as well as efforts to protect and interpret that historic character for the benefit of local residents and visitors alike.

On June 10 – when the Farrand garden was at its peak and overflowing with peonies – Katherine H. Kerin gave an illustrated lecture on Beatrix Farrand and Her Garden at Bellefield, to an audience of approximately 80 people. A local landscape gardener and founding member of BFGA, Kerin has been volunteering in various capacities at Bellefield since 1994. She subsequently completed her Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture at Cornell University on this garden and its restoration.

Following the lecture, which was given at the Henry A. Wallace Visitor and Education Center, a reception and plant sale was held at Bellefield. Tours of the Farrand garden were given by BFGA volunteers. In a delightful coincidence, Beatrix Farrand was born on June 19, 1872, so a joyful round of Happy Birthday, Beatrix rang out across the garden, and a delicious birthday cake was shared by all.



Bellefield Design Lecture attendees browse the BFGA plant sale and explore the garden. Each spring, volunteers pot up seedlings and divide larger perennials in the garden at Bellefield for our annual plant sale. This year, a few very special plants used by Farrand were obtained from other growers to augment the selection.

The Beatrix Farrand Garden Association would like to thank Carol Cohan and Frank Futral, both of the National Park Service, for their invaluable assistance in making the first Bellefield Design Lecture such a success. BFGA would also like to thank the Roosevelt Presidential Library for donating use of the state-of-the-art lecture facilities at the Wallace Center, as well as the Hyde Park Historical Association and the Hyde Park Visual Environment Committee for allowing the lecture announcement to be sent to their members.



The lecture reception included a celebration of our beloved Beatrix’s 134th birthday, marked with cake and song.



Three young guests enjoy a bit of cake. Top to bottom: Campbell Symmes Ives, Rose Lindbergh McDonnell, Olivia Donovan.

Of Deer Fencing and Audio Tours

In 2004, the Beatrix Farrand Garden Association celebrated its tenth anniversary with a fall fundraiser. At that time, we were raising money for new deer fencing. We are now thrilled to report that next year, the new fencing will be installed by the National Park Service when new deer fencing is also installed around Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt's nearby gravesite. Our current project is to create an audio tour that would bring to life the story of Beatrix Farrand and her garden in Hyde Park.

The National Park Service received a prestigious grant from the Save America's Treasure's program for Val-Kill, Eleanor Roosevelt's Hyde Park home. One of the projects NPS is undertaking with these monies is an audio tour for the Val-Kill grounds. Part of their project will be to determine the best of the many available technologies for such tours, and to design a system for the distribution and collection of the tour program and any required

SAVE THESE DATES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Francis H. Cabot, gardener extraordinaire and founder of the Garden Conservancy, will give an illustrated talk on Les Quatres Vents, his acclaimed garden in Quebec. This lecture will be held at the Vassar Brothers Institute in Poughkeepsie, and is sponsored by the Garden Club of Orange and Dutchess Counties, a member of the Garden Club of America. Please note that BFGA is offering copies of Mr. Cabot's award-winning book on this garden, *The Greater Perfection*, for sale to help fund the creation of an audio tour for the Farrand Garden.

Saturday, June 9, 2007

Hyde Park in Bloom, a biannual tour of local gardens organized by the Hyde Park Visual Environment Committee, begins at Bellefield.

Saturday, June 9, 2007

2nd Annual Bellefield Design Lecture, *An American Vision: Beatrix Farrand at Dumbarton Oaks*, given by Gail Collmann Griffen, Director of Horticulture, Dumbarton Oaks. The lecture will be held at 2:00 at the Henry A. Wallace Visitor and Education Center in Hyde Park, with a reception, plant sale, and garden tour to follow at Bellefield.

equipment. In December of 2005, NPS asked the Beatrix Farrand Garden Association to create the second in what is envisioned as a series of Hyde Park-related audio tours, and we agreed.



A woodchuck enjoys the pink border 'salad bar' — all the more reason we need good fencing.

Because the NPS project is still in its early stages, we do not yet know exactly how much it will cost to have the same company produce our audio tour. At this time we are estimating the cost will be at least \$25,000. At present, BFGA has \$10,000 to contribute to the project. In addition, we have received a gift of \$1,000 for this purpose from the Garden Club of Orange and Dutchess Counties, which has long been a supporter of the Beatrix Farrand Garden at Bellefield. We ask that all of you consider a special year-end gift to BFGA to help us create a high-quality interpretive program that will bring our story to more of Hyde Park's many visitors in an engaging and accessible manner. We plan to apply for grants to make up for any remaining funding shortfall.

Visit our new website

at www.beatrixfarrandgarden.org!

Created by Dave Hayes with input from Kate Braun, this site provides information on the history of the garden, upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, and directions to Bellefield.

Beatrix Goes to the Fair

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Andrea Bowen, a friend of BFGA volunteer Linda Friesitzer, is a truly talented decorative painter. She transformed the plywood of Lenny's creation into trompe l'oeil fieldstone walls traced with vines that looked so real that many of our visitors needed to touch the wall to believe it was wood! Andrea comes from a family of painters, and her specialty is faux finishes, as well as fine art. Even working under a tight time frame, and as a volunteer, Andrea created a marvel that delighted all who saw it. THE place for a fair photo opportunity became the end of the path before the gate and Andrea's wall! This magnificent wall is now in storage for use at future BFGA displays.

Beside a beautiful display sign painted by Andrea, Linda Friesitzer and George Kurten created an explanatory poster that outlined the position of Beatrix Farrand as one of America's finest landscape architects, as well as the importance of the volunteer effort that has restored the Bellefield garden.

Because our exhibit was to identify the reason it qualified as a "secret garden." As a result, the following poem was added to our poster:

*Walls of hemlock – walls of stone
Hid away this Beatrix treasure.
Secret then and Secret still
But open now for public pleasure.*

After the judging, Andrea's sign was adorned with a multi-colored ribbon stating, "Best Theme Interpretation." A little girl asked me, "How come you have the ONLY rainbow ribbon?" I replied, "Because we are unique!" As indeed we are.

Beatrix on the Farm

Our last public relations appearance of the season—a table at the Roosevelt Farm Day—was, once again, a volunteer effort to acquaint the public with our garden and its history. Scrapbooks and our DC Fair poster on display, brochures piled high, and two vases filled with our garden's treasures: Japanese Anemones, Balsam Impatiens, Verbenas, Hostas, Cleome, attracted visitors and, throughout the day, Linda Friesitzer, Cynthia Witman, Bev Polisena, Virginia Bickford, Helen Page and I took turns staffing the table. Two days



Setting up for the exhibit. Left to right—Doris Adams, Helen Page, Kate Kerin and Linda Friesitzer.

We staffed the space for the fair's run, passing out our new brochures which include our new website created by David Hayes, who works for the National Park Service but volunteered his services. Very few people knew the garden's location and most were eager to visit. All of us felt that our presence at the fair was an unqualified success and I would personally like to thank all who volunteered in the setting up and/or staffing, including Doris Adams, Virginia Bickford, Linda Friesitzer, Debby Glynn, Kate Kerin, Helen Page, Luise Seelback, Jim and Joan Smith, Cynthia Witman, Jane Symmes, and Anne Symmes.

Allelu Kurten
President, BFGA

If you are in need of a scenic painter for any special project, please contact Andrea Bowen at 845-863-5692 or andream@hvc.rr.com.

earlier I'd learned that each display had to be interactive! Cynthia saved the day with hand colored pictures of named bugs to be identified by children as GOOD BUGS or BAD BUGS. Expertly done and great fun, they've been carefully saved for any and all similar appearances next season. As always, volunteers made the difference.

Allelu Kurten



**Beatrix Farrand
Garden Association**

PO Box 315
Hyde Park, NY 12538

Gardeners' Party

The weeders celebrated the end of another gardening season at Bellefield with an elegant al fresco luncheon. Shown from left to right, standing: Jim Smith, Kate Kerin, Bev Polistena, Flo Fried, Cindy Witman, Linda Freisitzer, Helen Page, Allelu Kurten, Anne Symmes, and Doris Adams. Kneeling: Susan Devereux, Virginia Bickford, and Debby Glynn.



Meet us in the Garden

If you are interested in volunteering for the Beatrix Farrand Garden Association at Bellefield, there are a number of fun and exciting ways to join us. We need people to work on special events, fundraising, publicity, and publications for the garden. If you would prefer to get your hands in the dirt, volunteers meet in the garden every Tuesday morning during the growing season from 9:00 am to 11:00. Our professional horticulturist, Anne Symmes directs the gardening activities and trains volunteers in the finer points of maintaining over 3000 square feet of perennial borders. Garden volunteers have a great time working together and watching the garden grow and change week to week and all volunteers are welcome to join us in field trips we take to see other historic gardens. If you would like more information or would like to sign up to volunteer, please email us at info@beatrixfarrandgarden.org.