

JUNE'S GARDEN

It has been said it takes a whole village to raise a child. It also takes a whole village of involved gardeners to turn our town into what's becoming known as "a village of flowers."

Last summer I overheard a group of women talking about all the flowers they had seen growing throughout our town and how beautiful it was. They sat down beside me and were trying to identify some orange flowers growing nearby.

"Those orange flowers are lilies," one said.

"No, Muriel, they're some kind of gladiolus."

I heard another say, "You're both wrong. My mother raised those flowers. They're iris. I'd sure like to find a nursery to take some home."

Since I did know the name of the orange flowers they were trying to identify, I interrupted them. "Excuse me, maybe I can help you. Those orange flowers are montbretia. They grow like weeds here along the coast. Where do you live?"

"Kansas," they said. "Do you live here? What a beautiful town. Does everybody garden? Can you grow these flowers all year? Do you know what those lavender flowers are over there? We're not familiar with a lot of flowers we have seen in your gardens, but we have asked the shop owners if they know."

This conversation reminded me of years ago when Judy Osburn planted nemesia in the flower beds around Osburn's Grocery. She finally put up a sign, "I'm Nemesia," as so many people asked what kind of flowers they had growing there.

I did answer their questions and mentioned that there are signs naming some of the flowers growing in the gardens around shops. I asked them if they had visited the Chamber of Commerce building, as there is a list of the plants that grow there and also some of the flower seeds for sale. Jan and Alan Fenton created the Chamber's gardens and have continued to plant and maintain them. They provided the list and collected the seeds the Chamber has for sale. They have volunteered their expertise for many years.

I'm sure those of you who live here have overheard conversations similar to the one I overheard. "Garden fever" or "flower fever" seems to have flourished this last summer. New window boxes and flower gardens have been added in the business districts and private homes.

Some months ago I wrote about talking to a self-described "Old Timer" about beach gardens. His comment was, "Throw out a bunch of nasturtium seeds around a piece of driftwood. That's a beach garden." Our town is now far from what he described. Where did our "garden fever" start?

Before explorers and early settlers found the beauty of the northwest forests and Pacific coastline there is evidence that some of the native Indian tribes cultivated edible plants. For more information on this subject, read the article, "Native American Gardening on the Oregon Coast: The Uses of Fire," by Doug Duer, in this month's issue of the U.L.E.

Quoting from Terence O'Donnell's book on the history of Cannon Beach, "In the late 1800's and early 1900's when the settlers first built cabins they raised vegetables in what they called 'kitchen gardens.' When James Austin and his wife built Austin House, south of Cannon beach, flower baskets hung from the eaves, while a

shell path led down between the gnarled, wind-stunted trees to the beach."

Later in this book little is written about specific flower gardens; however, it does tell about people strolling through the woods gathering wild flowers of buttercups, paintbrush, foxglove and the pink buds of the salal to add to the bouquets of firecracker fuchsia, honeysuckle and hydrangea from their own gardens.

Montbretia, Calla lilies, escallonia, hydrangea, hardy fuchsia, Shasta daisies, honeysuckle and many varieties of rambling roses have naturalized throughout the coastal area. One can only suppose the early settlers brought these plants with them many years ago to add along with their "kitchen gardens."

During the days of the twenties and thirties it was noted in the Cannon Beach history book, six or seven auto camps were established, wooden platforms that either had tents erected or some roofed and floored. Some of these auto camps were combined with a small grocery, and at some camps there was a dining hall.

The book further mentions that one of the duties of the "hired girls" was to gather vegetables and berries from the campground garden, later to prepare these foods for the noon and evening meals.

Dora Hall Hardie and her husband moved to Cannon Beach in 1919 and lived here for 30 years. In her pamphlets on her "Memories of Cannon Beach" and about the beginnings of "The Library Club," she mentioned the Cannon Beach Garden Club, which was formed August 14, 1928:

"FLOWER SHOW. During the summer months, everyone always looked forward to coming and entering their choice flowers in the Garden Club flower show held in the spacious church basement. Many competent judges were in attendance, and everyone was always eager to see if their flowers would receive blue ribbons. There were always many various displays, and residents and visitors alike were welcome to present their flowers. (We had lovely window boxes on one small cottage on our place, and were asked to display them at the show, and sure enough our pride soared when we saw the blue ribbons.)

"Miss Ella Ruilan was the first to organize the Garden Club idea. With the help of her sister, who was keen on flowers, they did a wonderful job of it, but after several years were anxious to be relieved of the work. About that time, Mrs. Frances Hurlburt and her husband had purchased a home on Adams Street. She was a very qualified person to take charge, as it took plenty of work both before and after the flower show. But there were always others who came to give assistance.

"Later on, the school board very graciously consented for the Garden Club to utilize the school gymnasium for the show, as it was a much larger place and there was ample parking space.

"Through the years, we were also indebted to the Cannon Beach Garden Club for their generous support of the library, both books and donations. (The first President of the Garden Club was Miss Ella Ruilan, followed by Mrs. Frances Hurlbert.)"

In my conversation with Lee Esterbrook, who attended the first grade at Cannon Beach Grade School in the early 1920's, he told me that California poppies grew along the roadside. He and a friend

would gather bouquets and carry them home in their lunch pails. He also told of a store two blocks north of Midtown. The shopkeeper tied apples onto the barren apple tree growing there, to fool the passersby. Coastal weather conditions are not as kind to fruit-bearing trees as the valley is; however, there are still a few wild crab apple trees. The Indians prized these trees to use for implements. Cured apple wood can be almost as strong as iron.

Esterbrook also told about Mr. Ostrom's 12 ft. high white lilies and 8 to 10 ft. Calla lilies he grew in his shady garden. Mr. Ostrom's home was on the front between Washington and Taft. His garden was on the shady east side of his yard.

Next month, another quote from "Memories of Cannon Beach," by Dora Hall Hardie ... and Helen Thurman's recollections of "Honeysuckle Lodge," that was built by Barry McKay in the early 1900's.

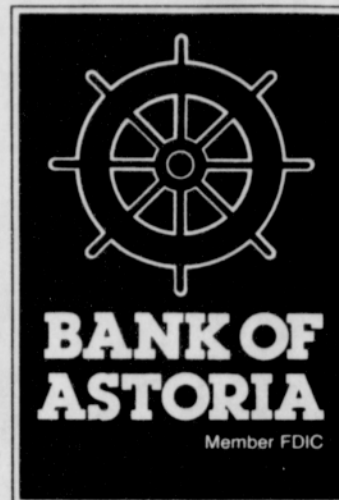
To be continued.

If you have any garden memories of these long-ago days in Cannon Beach, I'd love to hear about them and add them into these columns. *June's Garden*, P. O. Box 74, Cannon Beach, OR 97110.

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I never write 'metropolis' for seven cents because I can get the same price for 'city'. I never write 'policeman' because I can get the same money for 'cop'. Mark Twain

