

The AMERICAN PEONY SOCIETY Bulletin

Winter 2023; No. 408

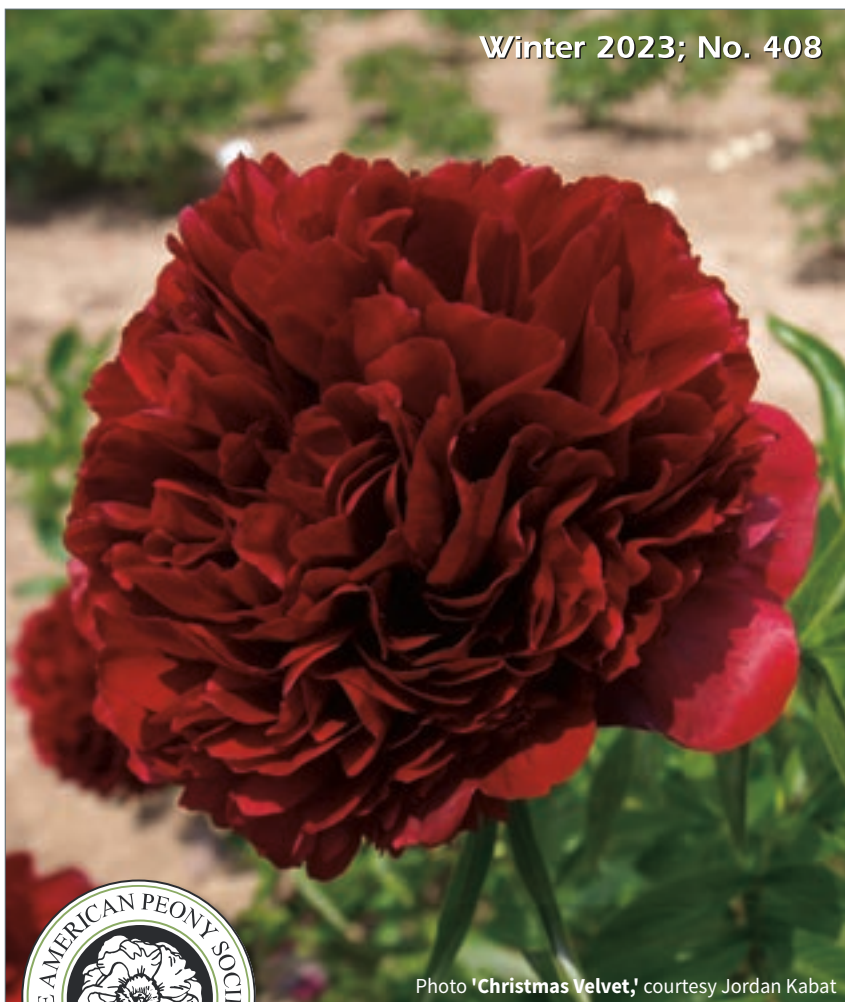


Photo 'Christmas Velvet,' courtesy Jordan Kabat



Peace. Joy. Peonies.

THE AMERICAN PEONY SOCIETY

APS is a nonprofit horticultural organization incorporated as a membership corporation under the laws of the State of Wisconsin. APS is organized exclusively for educational and scientific purposes, and especially to promote, encourage and foster the development and improvement of the genus *Paeonia* and public interest therein. These purposes are expressly limited so that APS qualifies as an exempt organization under section 501(c)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or the corresponding provision of any future Internal Revenue law. Donors may not deduct contributions to APS.

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MEMBERSHIP & THE APS BULLETIN

Dues are paid for the calendar year. Dues received before August 25 are recorded for the current year and members will be sent all four issues of *The Bulletin* for that year (while supplies last). Dues received between August 25 and November 25 will receive the December issue of *The Bulletin* and all issues for the following year. Memberships received after November 25 will be recorded for the following year. Online reading is available for the five most current Bulletin issues. Those with online-only membership will not receive printed Bulletins. Membership information and an online registration form are available on the APS website. Individual memberships are for one or two persons at the same address, receiving one copy of *The Bulletin*. Commercial memberships are for one business and one or two persons at the same address. Refunds are available only to Institutional members for unmailed issues. All memberships are non-transferable. Please notify APS promptly of address changes. Missed issues must be claimed within one year. APS is not responsible for undeliverable mailing addresses.

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President's Message Winter 2023

Nate Bremer, APS President and Director – Reedsville, Wisconsin

Fall can be as interesting for peony aficionados as the spring bloom season. This is certainly true for me.

While I love bloom season and look forward to it each winter, the fall provides a multitude of activities, observations, tasks and opportunities. Throughout the APS, there are auctions, dividing and grafting classes and member events. Many regional societies and APS offered such activities this year with outstanding attendance. These activities allow all of us to expand our collections, but more importantly, increase our understanding of the peony itself.



During the fall season, the APS experiences a large increase in correspondence, and fields many questions which support the love of peonies. So, what is the allure of peonies in the fall? For many members of APS, it is the time in which our peony orders arrive for planting in the garden, which provides excitement for the future! For other members, including commercial growers, it is the time when we dig and divide our peonies to share with others or to increase the cultivars we already have.

Digging and dividing is a labor of love, and provides numerous insights into our peonies. Root structure, disease issues, impacts of growing conditions and a multitude of other outcomes can be observed in the plants we dig during this period. These observations are important to help us better understand the beloved plants we grow and find potential answers to questions we may have about plant performance over the year.

This year was especially interesting – many members noted numerous problems with their herbaceous peonies. Most members agree that climate was likely the main cause of poorer-than-normal increase in plant size. In our location, the climate has seen roller coaster conditions, ranging from excessive record rainfall in 2019 - 2020 to drought periods throughout the last three summers. Woody peonies dealt with drought conditions more easily, in fact, showing tremendous growth, bloom and beautiful fall foliage color. Herbaceous peonies suffered to a greater degree – showing less increase, foliar damage and for some, burning of flowers during the bloom season. This is not necessarily great news for members, but it is a reality

revealed during the fall observation period. In this issue of The Bulletin, please note Myra Froc's climate article – something we all should be interested in.

I hope all members had an enjoyable fall season. If you haven't expanded into the fall enjoyment of peonies, please consider doing so in coming years! APS benefits from numerous forms of peony-related activities and we hope members may become more involved with the numerous options peonies provide.

Warmest Regards,

Nate Bremer – APS President

Bulletin Board

- 1) **Leadership/Volunteerism Options.** As 2024 approaches, members have the opportunity to assist APS through volunteerism in numerous programs and leadership positions. Adding new members to leadership positions helps keep our society fresh with new ideas, expertise, enthusiasm and gives long serving directors the opportunity for a bit of a rest. Nominations for Board of Director positions will be undertaken for the 2024-2026 term this coming January through March 15. If you have interest in becoming involved as a leader, we invite you to contact Cory Tischman, APS Nominations and Elections Chair at: aps2@americanpeonysociety.org or contact@americanpeonysociety.org . Please also visit the Member Portal at: <https://americanpeonysociety.org/member-portal/pages/board-of-directors-information/> for further information.
- 2) **Seed Program.** The winter chill may be here, but it's not too late to send seeds to the APS Seed Program! Scott Parker, APS' Seed Program Chair is busy organizing and readying seeds for sale and distribution in 2024. Donations of seeds allow many gardeners to experience growing peonies in an entirely new way and help to support APS' educational initiatives. Donation of seeds is great way to get involved as a volunteer and no submission is too large or small. Growing a peony from seed allows members a great experience and ultimately seeing a plant completely different than its parents. Seed donation notifications may be made through the Member Portal at: <https://americanpeonysociety.org/member-portal/pages/contribute/donate-seeds/> or by contacting

Scott Parker at: seeds@americanpeonysociety.org.

- 3) **Publication Delivery.** Please know APS takes extra measures to make sure your Bulletin and New Peony Directory are delivered safely. Incidences of undelivered Bulletins to our **overseas members** increased in 2023 and APS recommends overseas members make use of an online membership rather than paper copy delivery. APS is not responsible or able to re-mail stolen, misdelivered, undelivered, missing, or lost Bulletins and publications to members.
- 4) **New Peony Cultivar Directory.** This publication features the 2023 new peony registrations submitted to the American Peony Society's ICRA Registrar. The Editor and Registrar are nearing completion on this publication and members should expect to see it in their mail in early 2024.
- 5) **APS Email Notifications and Spam.** Internet and email applications have become more security focused and often certain organizations or mail types are blocked due to application settings within an application. Please make sure to set your email/internet application security settings to allow The American Peony Society communications. We always answer inquires, but you will not receive a reply if your application has settings blocking or placing APS communications in SPAM or another automated folder.
- 6) **Award Nominations.** APS continues to honor people important to the peony world through three major awards: 1) A.P. Saunders Memorial Award, 2) Bertrand H. Farr Lifetime Achievement Award and the 3) American Peony Society Award. Members are encouraged to submit deserving candidates and supporting information for consideration of these awards through the APS Website: Member Portal>>Donate & Contribute>>Nominations & Surveys>>Personal Awards Nominations. All submissions will be carefully considered and those who most exemplify their work in a given area will receive priority. Past nominations remain in consideration for awards. Nominations due on or before April 1, 2024.
- 7) **BOD Elections.** During the Annual General Membership Meeting, held in Syracuse, New York, APS Members elected the following Directors for the 2023-2025 term: Linette Sorrentino and Nate Bremer. Thanks go to these dedicated volunteers for their past, present and future leadership!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

Sign Up or Renew After January 1st

January is just around the corner and hundreds of membership subscriptions will come due for renewal. If you are a current member, you will receive a renewal notice via email from the website at the end of December.

Some membership types may have been changed since the last time you signed up, which will require members to purchase an updated new membership at: <https://americanpeonysociety.org/product/membership/>.

An Important Word on Automated Renewal & Credit Charges – Check Your Account to Avoid Surprises

Some members elect to renew their memberships automatically through storage of their credit card information in their APS website account (convenient, but not for everyone). It is easy to forget that you have selected this option, then wonder about charges.

The APS website uses a secure ecommerce software to process membership. APS website managers are not able to access your private accounts or financial information – which means *we are unable to make changes or adjustments for you*. You must make any changes.

Tips for Managing Your Account

❖ **Check to See if You Are on the Auto-renew Setting.** Our software is set to automatically charge your card annually if you have previously selected auto-renew. If you would like to continue the auto-renew option, no changes are required.

❖ **Switching to Manual Renewal or Opting Out.** If you would like to *manually* renew or opt out vs. continue with the automated system, make sure to login to your APS account online and *turn off the automatic renewal toggle and remove your credit card information* ahead of time. **Note that simply “canceling” your membership will not stop the funds from transferring.** You must remove your card information.

❖ **Review Your Account and Make Any Changes Now.** Please avoid frustration by checking your accounts and making any adjustments by year end. As mentioned, for security reasons, APS website managers are not able to access your private accounts or help you make changes. Also verify that the APS is “white listed” and will not be treated as spam.

❖ **Do NOT Attempt to Renew Prior to January 1.** The website will not allow you to do so while your subscription is current. All memberships will remain active until February and then removed from the roles if not renewed.

❖ **Troubleshooting & Technical Support.** If you have troubles with any renewal link on the APS site, we suggest going to <https://americanpeonysociety.org/product/membership/> to purchase a new membership (we'll know to treat it as a renewal). However, if you have problems, please do not hesitate to contact us at contact@americanpeonysociety.org for assistance.

Exploring Woody Peonies in the Urban Environment of Seoul, South Korea

Bernie Miller – Media, PA

Five years ago, I had an opportunity to visit Korea, and recently returned to Seoul and the surrounding region this past March into April. Experiencing the culture through palaces, national museums, botanical gardens, and temples gave me a much deeper appreciation of the Korean people. I always have my “plant radar” on when traveling, especially for peonies. On both trips, I looked for and sought out peonies in gardens and what was available to purchase commercially.

I share with you my observations and insights.

South Korea has become a significant global exporter and research center since the 1960’s. The population has significantly increased during this same period and there are now approximately 23 million people living within the Seoul city limits and the surrounding metropolitan area. Space is at a premium, so they build upwards with thousands of skyscrapers for offices and apartments. Their society does appreciate both nature and art so there are many walking trails in the mountains surround-

ing the city and most office buildings have large sculptures prominently displayed outside.

While in Seoul, I began searching for woody peonies to see where they were sold and how they were displayed in the city’s gardens. I found myself in the greenhouse district of the city to locate large sources of woody peonies. Most were either imports from China, which is only a short airplane ride away, or locally grown grafted plants. The nurseries will sell individual plants or take wholesale orders.

My visit was in late spring, so plants were offered either as potted plants or as plants which had their roots pruned and wrapped with a small amount of soil and burlap that would be slightly larger than a softball in size. This caught my attention because there were a pile of them on the ground with a sign saying “5,000 won” which is approximately \$5.00 each. These were locally grown and were not identified by name or color. I asked the three nurseries I visited if they exported



A structure at the largest palace in Seoul. South Koreans can enter palace grounds for free if they dress in traditional garb.

woody peonies and they all said they only sold in the Seoul area.

Onward to find out where they were growing peonies was the easier project. The city has reconstructed many of the palaces and woody peonies are used on the grounds of almost all. The plantings are all about impact and photo opportunities, so woody peonies are densely planted, in some cases as close as 12 to 24 inches apart. This causes the plants to grow upwards with a few stems. No mulch is used. Peony beds could be found both in full sun and in areas where they would get partial shade for part of the day.

On palace grounds the most popular plants used in order of quantity were azaleas, cherry trees, evergreen trees, and woody peonies. South Koreans can enter palaces for free if they come dressed in historical garb and so the gardens are full of people taking photos with their phones and all the better if there is a massive planting of a blooming flower or shrub.

Apartments do not have balconies so individuals either have houseplants or the landlords have plantings around the high rises.

Woody peonies are also used in front of commercial establishments infrequently, but when



Koreans appreciate art and nature. Here, a mature woody peony comes out of dormancy in late April.

used they will place (as an example) twenty 3–5-year-old plants in a 6 x 3-foot raised bed. Maintenance staff use hoses to water floral displays and garden beds. I looked for woody peonies being grown in large containers, having seen photos from China displaying them in this fashion. I only saw one example on the presidential grounds. They do not appear to use potted peonies for temporary floral displays whereas they do with azaleas, hydrangeas, and annuals.

The Seoul City Museum, in my opinion, optimized the use of woody peonies by giving them ample room to grow and placed them above a retaining wall with the walkway below so when the plants flowered the flowers were at shoulder height and higher. They were also the oldest and largest specimens seen on my visit at 4 feet high and 6 feet wide. Botanical gardens have large specimens that are planted near walls with ample room that help highlight the blooms but also pro-

tect the plants as they can have harsh winter conditions in the mountains.

Our timing was perfect: the cherry trees were blooming throughout the region to our and residents' delight. Woody peonies were coming out of dormancy. Their woody peony season occurs around the same time as the US Mid-Atlantic region which translates into the end of April and early May.

Herbaceous season follows the tree peony season. Photos suggest that many herbaceous pe-

onies are large single flowered white and pink unnamed varieties.

Seoul is a technologically advanced city with many hotels, thousands of restaurants, traditional Asian and modern markets and shopping districts, and good public transportation. It's also travel friendly: most public spaces provide information in English. A good guidebook or some research beforehand will allow you to explore this city easily. It is definitely a location to put on your bucket list.



May dazzles with blooms of woody peonies, cherry trees, azaleas and more.



Fall 2023 Online Auction Report



by Lois Girton, APS Auction Co-Chair

Another successful online auction for APS members in the USA was held September 21-24. This was an opportunity for our members to obtain the latest introductions and some rare older cultivars. All USA members were invited to donate, and we were pleased to have 15 individuals contribute peony roots, seeds, gift certificates, or peony themed items, joining 13 commercial members and the APS Seed Distribution Program. APS netted \$10,807.41 from the sale of 105 items and cash donations of \$350 to support our programs.

Two new introductions donated by their hybridizers, **'Hanadama Pearl'** (Bremer, 2022), a first-time offering, and **'Patricia Jean'** (Stanek, 2020) each brought in \$400 followed closely by a collection of four Roy Pehrson and Chris Laning cultivars donated by Tim Stanek at \$385. Two rare older cultivars, **'Black Monarch'** (Glasscock, 1939) from Jill Stevens went for \$355 and **'Vera Wassenberg'** (Wassenberg, 1947) from Don Hollingsworth for \$300. Also bringing in \$300 was **'Yellow Bird'** (Bob Johnson/Adelman Peony Garden, 2019) donated by Adelman Peony Garden. Although herbaceous hybrids and lactifloras made up the bulk of the donations, species seeds and the six woody peonies in the auction also did very well. Perhaps reflecting interest generated by our visits to the Millard Garden and Linwood Gardens during convention, **'Antigone'** (Daphnis, 1995) sold for \$300 and **'Artemis'** (Daphnis, 1986) for \$255, both from Cricket Hill Gardens.

A special thank you to our top donors Tim Stanek, Don Hollingsworth (Don Hollingsworth Nursery), Dan Furman (Cricket Hill Gardens), Nate Bremer (Solaris Farms), Kady Adelman (Adelman Peony Garden), and Piet Wierstra (Oregon Perennials) and to our newest donors Roger Jones (A-1 Nursery), Shelley Derner (Silo Ridge Peony Farm), Lois Rockcastle, Keri Herer, Melissa Sullivan, and Margaret Wright. Thanks also to the 45 members who were active bidders or made cash donations. And finally, to the APS Auction Committee, Jill Stevens, Co-Chair, Nick Maycher, and Mary Mueller, who all helped put the auction together.

American Peony Society
Annual Convention

June 5 - 9, 2024 – Bloomington, MN

**Hosted by the Minnesota Peony Society and
American Peony Society**

The National Exhibition will be held at The Hilton, 3900 American Boulevard, Bloomington, MN

Minnesota has a long history with the peony. Of the current 7342 registered peonies, almost 450 were registered by 16 Minnesota hybridizers. The 2024 APS convention is showcasing the work of Minnesota peony pioneers. O.F and A.M. Brand started registering peonies in 1907 and today there are still a few active peony hybridizers. Many of the varieties introduced by peony pioneers are still in commercial production along with new introductions. The 2024 APS Convention will be a premier peony event to see these wonderful plants and flowers in person.

ACCOMMODATIONS & LOCATIONS

The Hilton
3900 American Boulevard West
Bloomington, MN 55437
1-952-893-9500

We have reserved a block of rooms at the Hilton. The rate is \$129.00 per night and includes breakfast. The Hotel is conveniently located at I-494 and France Avenue, only 8 miles from the airport. There is also an airport shuttle available and free parking. There are many restaurants in this area plus The Hilton has a full-service restaurant and bar. There will be a hotel link and full convention information on the APS website in December of 2023.

Convention Highlights

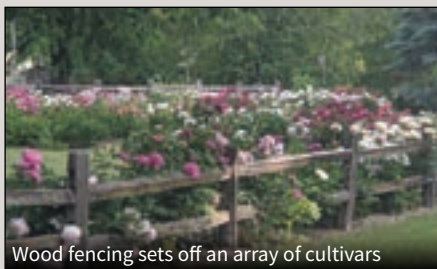
- APS Peony Exhibition of Cut Flowers, Artistic Designs and Photography Contest.
- Educational Seminars
- Live Auction (mostly fall root delivery)
- Garden Tours, both commercial and private
- Open Gardens
- Special exhibitions and flower arranging contest (Chop Box)
- Daily Hospitality Suite
- Meals: Daily breakfast (for registered hotel guests), Welcome dinner, Thursday and Friday lunches and the Saturday evening banquet are all included with your paid convention fee.

GARDEN TOURS

Jill Stevens Gardens Benson, MN

Jill Stevens has been in love with peonies since childhood. When she moved to her current location in 1993, her backyard was a vacant lot. Jill decided if she planted peonies around the border, people would respect her yard. Now it is filled with over 1200 varieties of peonies. She enjoys caring for her peonies and keeping meticulous records of their progress. **'Orange Glory'** (Auten 1956) is the name of her favorite peony. She is passionate about showing and sharing her peonies.

Jill is a Master Gardener, Former Master Gardener State Advisory Board Member, current American Peony Society Board Director, current Minnesota Peony Society Vice President, APS Award of Landscape Merit judge and Co-chair, APS auction Co-chair, and field editor for The APS Bulletin. Her garden has appeared on Pioneer Public Television's Prairie Yard and Garden program on two occasions. Her peonies have been featured in print in The Senior Perspective, The APS Bulletin, Local Newspapers, Minnesota Farm Guide, and The Northern Gardener.



Wood fencing sets off an array of cultivars



Just some of Jill Stevens' collection of beautiful pink peonies

SWENSON GARDENS

Howard Lake, MN

The journey into peonies for Keith and Becky Swenson began two generations ago with their grandparents' love of all flowers. Becky's grandmother was the first president of the Ely, MN gardening club and Keith's grandparents were avid gardeners in NW Wisconsin. That love helped form Swenson Gardens in 2002. What started out as cultivating a 2-acre plot of land in Delano, MN blossomed into the purchase of a 40-acre farm near Howard Lake, MN in 2008.

This generational peony affair exploded in 1998 after meeting Roger F. Anderson. Keith and Roger developed a friendship and mentor relationship. In 2013, Swenson Gardens purchased his last genera-

tion of intersectional hybrid, herbaceous, Lactiflora and tree peony seedlings.

Fast forward to 2023, Swenson Gardens is now considered the world's largest chemical-free peony grower and hybridizer of new peonies. Keith and their long-time employee Dan Zabel are often seen tip toeing through the peonies hybridizing Roger's seedlings as well as their generations of seedlings. Becky is involved in the day-to-day business of customer service, social media and providing peony presentations to regional garden clubs.

Swenson Gardens is delighted to invite the 2023 APS national convention to their peony farm. Bring your camera as their peonies will be at peak bloom during the convention. For more information you can visit their website [SwensonGardens.com](https://www.swensongardens.com) as well as Facebook and Instagram.



The seedling field at Swenson Gardens



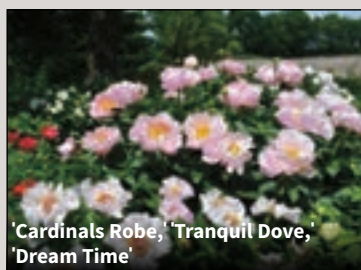
Swenson Garden's acres of peonies

David & Linette Sorrentino
Chaska, MN

Located just outside Chaska, MN on several acres, David and Linette have been collecting and growing peonies since the early 1990's. Linette's love for gardening began in her youth when she so proudly would help in her grandparents' lake cabin gardens. Their first peonies included a generic red, white, and pink purchased at a local garden center. Always purchase your peonies from a reputable grower, the peonies turned out to be two whites and a pink with no names.

In 1994 they discovered commercial growers with named varieties and collecting began in earnest. There are now about 750 plants including over 475 varieties as well as tree peony grafts and seedlings. The collection includes many Minnesota bred plants and new hybrids selected for breeding, cut flowers, and just general enjoyment. The peonies are located throughout the property in landscaped gardens. Their first APS exhibition was in the mid 90's when fellow Minnesotans Gus and Char Sindt, Floyd and Eloise Kimball,

and Ben Gowen were still active members. This led to many years of showing peonies at the MPS shows and APS exhibitions, running peony auctions, and now currently organizing the APS Convention Exhibitions. They have been accused of being a tad bit peony eccentric and this passion is reflected in their collection.



MINNESOTA LANDSCAPE ARBORETUM

Chanhassen, MN Lang Peony Walk

The Arboretum has 3 species peonies, 191 cultivars and a total of 240 specimens. The collection began in 1961, just four years after the Arboretum opened. In 1983 it was moved as part of the devel-

opment of a series of gardens adjacent to the Snyder Building, and at that time was named the Lang Peony Walk.

The initial acquisitions were nineteen cultivars obtained from Silvia Saunders of Clinton, NY. The remaining peonies were collected from Minnesota nurseries. You will find peonies from hybridizers such as Lins, Brand, Tischler and Franklin. Lins had a farm in nearby Cologne, MN where there is currently a collection of most of his introductions. Another prominent grower was Tischler. In 1956 the Tischler brothers purchased the Brand nursery, which lasted until the late 1970s. Bob Tischler then started Tischler Peony Garden, introducing around 40 named cultivars. The Arboretum acquired some of these varieties over the years. Many of the Tischler varieties also found their way into local nurseries including the former Countryside Gardens in Delano and Hidden Springs Nursery, formerly owned by Harvey Buchite. The connection to Minnesota hybridizers continues to be an important emphasis.

The Arboretum also has an impressive archive in its library of old Brand catalogs and other documents from the Minnesota growers.



Don't forget about the peony exhibition. The show will be at The Hilton and will feature cut flowers from around the country. APS expects a large showing from Midwest gardeners. There will be an artistic section and a photography section. The exhibition is a great way to become involved in APS and to meet other peony enthusiasts. Seminars will include talks about hybridizing, a Commercial Growers meeting, and other topics on raising fine peonies.

Mark your calendars and dream this winter of traveling to a favorite and historical destination for peony fanatics. The full schedule and registration form along with details of the event will be electronically available on the APS website in December. The Minnesota Peony Society and the American Peony Society encourage you to plan on coming next June to be immersed in peony heaven.

Winter Seminar Series 2024

Grab your coffee or tea and join us for another series of presentations via Zoom to keep you learning about peonies during the winter months. These will be held on the mornings of the first Saturday of each month January through April, chosen to best accommodate our volunteer speakers and the largest number of members possible.

Sign into the Member Portal on the APS website to register for these seminars. Attendance is limited to 100.

Saturday, January 6, 10:30 CST "Choosing the Best Peonies for the Landscape" - presented by Cory Tischman, APS Director and Co-Chair of the Award of Landscape Merit Committee

A guide to selecting the "right" peonies for your garden and how the designation Award of Landscape Merit (ALM) can help with your decisions. Cory will go over the criteria used for judging the ALM winners, how cultivars are selected for judging, and discuss the importance of judging peonies in a wide range of growing conditions. The presentation will reveal upcoming cultivars selected to be judged for the ALM.

Saturday, February 3, 10:30 am CST "The Story of the Saunders Peonies at Winterthur Museums and Gardens" - presented by Linda Eirhart, Director of Horticulture, Senior Curator of Plants, Winterthur

Linda will present a brief overview of the design and history of the Winterthur Garden. She will then focus on Winterthur's collection of Saunders peonies. That story is told in the correspondence between H.F. du Pont and Professor A. P. Saunders and then with Silvia Saunders on different cultivars, color combinations, and the 1962 Chelsea Flower show. Linda will also touch on the ongoing preservation work for the collection.

Saturday, March 2, 10:30 am CST "The Canadian Peony Society 2023 National Show: Celebrating 25 Years of the CPS" presented by Nick Maycher, CPS Prairies Director and APS Director

Join Nick as he recounts the 2023 CPS National Show, held at the Oshawa Valley Botanical Gardens during the 19th annual Oshawa Peony Festival — the centerpiece of the milestone CPS 25th anniversary celebration. This inspirational story, told travelogue style, will feature captivating imagery that explores some of the people, places, and peonies that have made the CPS what it is today.

Saturday, April 6, 10:30 am CDT "'Fertile Advanced Generation Intersectional Hybrid (AGIH) Peonies: Recent Developments and Future Directions and Goals" presented by Donald R. Smith, Peony Hybridizer Extraordinaire

Several important advancements in intersectional hybrid peony hybridizing made in recent years have moved us much closer to realizing the long-term goal of creating a new race of fertile AGIH peonies. These new developments will be described and discussed along with their implications for the future of AGIH breeding.

submitted by Lois Girton, Speakers Bureau

Open Sesame!

APS Bulletin regional editor Jerri O'Connor was determined to save peony blooms for her daughter's visit in July. In early June, she carefully cut and stored the buds in a small spare refrigerator. Weeks later, she opened the refrigerator and her heart sank. The blooms were frozen solid. "They looked like little blocks of ice," said Jerri. "Oh well," she thought, "Why not try rehydrating them?"

The result? The peonies opened beautifully, especially the show stopper **'Garden Treasure'** (yellow shown here.) Another reason we love these crazy wonderful plants. Photo credit Jerri O'Connor.



The Language of Peonies

Herbaceous [/(h)ər'bāSHəs/]

Originating from the Latin word **herba**, meaning grassy or herb. Botanical definitions vary slightly and point to any plant in which annual stem growth dies to the ground each season, marking the beginning of dormancy.

Herbaceous peonies annually produce stems and leaves which persist through most of the summer and into fall, after which time the plants become dormant. The loss of leaves and stems protects the plant from the unfavorable growing conditions accompanied by seasonal change (cold temperatures, low light, unsuitable precipitation, etc.).

In the garden, herbaceous peonies exhibit the same characteristics of their species ancestors. Foliage and stems should be cut to the ground and removed from the garden to prevent overwintering of disease, which can impact annual growth in the future.



Herbaceous peony stems and leaves at their peak of health in spring.

Note: All herbaceous peonies will show decline in their foliage in late summer through the fall season and often gardeners incorrectly associate this with disease issues.



Fall herbaceous peony foliage in heavy decline - time to cut and remove from the garden.

In Search of the Saunders *P. macrophylla*

Peter Waltz – Exeter, New Hampshire

This article is not intended to be autobiographical - after all, it's about peonies. And yet, speculating on the question, "How did I get to this exact point?" may be relevant. Like many of you, my interest in peonies began as a casual trial - one type of perennial among dozens of other perennials to evaluate. Add to this a fascination with large leaves and a love of learning by reading.

My interest in big leaves began almost sixty years ago as a teenager when I first encountered *Magnolia tripetala*, a tree new to me at that time. In my 40's I joined the Magnolia Society, and now have growing here numerous specimens of *Magnolia macrophylla*, with the largest leaves of any tree that can be grown in New Hampshire. I think it is possible to further increase the size of hybrid peony leaflets, and *P. macrophylla* pollen seems a good first choice to use in doing this.

Here I describe a single journey which, in the end, might accomplish several things, all connected in some way to the plant Saunders called *P. macrophylla*. It is a story of connected steps from a simple beginning, reaching the present with two specific goals. One is to

determine if a likely candidate plant is closely related to "Saunders *macrophylla*" by scientific experiment, and the other to recreate a lost Saunders hybrid.

For many of us who grow Saunders plants, *Paeonia macrophylla* hybrids form an indispensable hybrid group. In 2023, where are the *P. macrophylla* plants that Saunders used? Apparently, they have all "run out", no longer extant. Considering their importance in the makeup of so many Saunders plants, how can one get a plant which is a close relative of the *P. macrophylla* plants that Saunders used? Therein lies the challenge.

Almost all of Saunders' named *P. macrophylla* hybrids were descended in one way or another from a single plant he bought from Van Tubergen in Holland in 1915 or a few years earlier.⁽¹⁾ It was sent under the name *P. wittmanniana*, but Saunders amended that to *P. macrophylla*, or just 'macro' in his notes during the 1920s. Due to a name change in the 1930s, he concluded that it might in fact be *P. tomentosa*. This article will make no attempt to unravel the tangled nomenclature surrounding *P. macrophylla*, but the foregoing histori-

cal information conveys the general problem, which is that the true identity of a plant goes beyond the name under which you receive it. Return now to the one plant from Van Tubergen; we will call this "Mac_VanT". The plant Mac_VanT produced self-crossed seedlings, and seven of these were planted out in 1919, numbers 1482 through 1488. From that point onward, pollen from all these plants (along with Mac_VanT) was used interchangeably under the name "macro". Saunders noted differences in the group of seven seedlings in regard to number of petals, leaf size, and leaf color. A systematics approach would probably agree with Saunders and group all these plants together under the one name "*P. macrophylla*", but a genetic approach would point out that each seedling is different because of the recombination that takes place in the pollen and embryo leading to each seed. But like Saunders, we will assume for the moment that indeed all of his plants called macro were very closely related, and that none of the seedlings of Mac_VanT were hybrids, harboring an unseen

parent. From a close reading of his notes, sometimes the seedling of a given cross did not present a phenotype showing both parents. Whenever that was the case, Saunders threw out the putative hybrid.

As a serious student of Saunders, I felt it necessary to somehow acquire a plant or two of "Saunders *macrophylla*". I will not go into a long discussion about historical *Paeonia wittmanniana* and its subspecies terminology, or geographical locations, or the other names such as *P. tomentosa* or *P. steveniana* that have been used over the years, since it misses the main point, which is this: in order to be considered something like "Saunders *macrophylla*", the subject plant's pollen must produce a fraction of F1 (first filial generation) hybrid plants which have quantifiable features like those of Saunders. It is a basic tenet of science that any well-defined experiment can be repeated with the expectation of the same statistical results. With this in mind, we need to choose specific plants to use as seed parents and define what will constitute successful results.

Basic outline of the project

1. The controlled pollinations will use plants of garden *P. lactiflora* as seed parents, using only pollen of a qualifying candidate "macro".
2. Each cross will be replicated.
3. The specific forms of *P. lactiflora* to be used will primarily be garden forms (named plants), but species *P. lactiflora* will also be used for comparison. Saunders used only garden forms.

4. The hybrid plants that come from these crosses will be grown to flowering.
5. The hybrid plants will be observed for a number of key features, and the results scored in a systematic way.
6. In order to be considered a close relative of "*Saunders macrophylla*", the morphological scored results must be statistically the same as those of the same crosses of Saunders.

List of Scored Results

1. The hybrids must all be triploid ($2n = 3x = 15$).
2. A fraction of the experimental hybrids must have certain key features found in the Saunders' F1 hybrids of the same cross (The Saunders' reference F1 plants will be '**Shell Pink**' (1939), '**Chalice**' (1929), '**Audrey**' (1938), and '**Seraphim**' (1929) – all measured triploids).
3. Features other than the ones listed above may be found during the experiment, and these may prove useful as well.

It is important to state that we are not looking for an exact match to any of Saunders' named F1 hybrids. Saunders only named plants with good flower form and plant habit, and these comprised a small fraction of the whole. We are fortunate that Saunders kept enough marginal notes on both the macro plants and their F1 hybrids to make this experiment possible. There are no results to report yet (in 2023) since the project as outlined above is just starting. The rest of this article is given over to a discussion of the various plants I have grown in the past, all possible candidates for being closely related to the *P. macrophylla* of Saunders. I am heartened to think that the most recent contender (grown here under the name Mac_WM) may be closer to the real thing than any of the other 18 preceding it.

Key details of Saunders *P. macrophylla* based on marginal notes:

1. Individual leaflets can be very large. This feature varies among individuals. The largest macro leaflet noted by Saunders was 9.5" x 5.5" (not including the petiole but including the acuminate tip and tapered base). Each year I look for the largest leaflet of the season and calculate its leaf area. An ellipse is a good estimating geometry to use for a typical peony leaflet, provided that the dimension of the long axis of the leaf is short-

ened to *not* include any tapered ends, but the whole width is used as is. If the adjusted length is defined as A, and the width as B, then Area $A = (\pi/4) (AB)$. For the Saunders leaf mentioned here, that area would be about $(9 \times 5.5) \times (\pi/4) = 38.5$ square inches. For comparison, the largest leaflet area measured here (so far) is about 36 square inches, but I continue to make crosses with the goal of increasing leaf area in the next generation.

2. Leaves emit an odor of boxwood when warmed by the sun. Many of the contenders have done this, but some have not.
3. Any genuine candidate is expected to have "quilted" leaves, with noticeably depressed veins on the upper surface. The Saunders lacti x macro F1's also tend to have this type of leaf. Saunders made specific notes describing this feature.
4. Leaf shape is broad with an acuminate tip.
5. Plant has only one flower per stem.
6. Must be tetraploid, $2n = 4x = 20$ chromosomes.

When I first joined the APS in 1984, I read the complimentary copy of *The Peonies* by Wister and decided that I wanted to grow every species peony for which I could find seed, so I could manage to see some of what Saunders saw. I was 39 at the time, and the world was young. What I discovered was that species peony seed was not easily available. There was no internet to help. Somehow I learned about the newsletter called ***Paeonia*** then edited by Chris Laning. In ***Paeonia*** I read articles by Don Hollingsworth, wrote to him, and purchased some breeder plants (but still no species). Gradually the net was cast wider and wider, in rough order: SPIN (Species Peony Information Network) (1980s), Irmtraud Rieck (Germany) (1990s), Galen Burrell (1990-2010), Will McLewin (UK) (2000-2010); and in current era (CE), *P. macrophylla* seeds from Russia (internet), the Scottish Rock Garden Club, the North American Rock Garden Society, and the Alpine Garden Society.

To be fair, almost no one ever claims to have *P. macrophylla* seed, choosing instead to list seed under the older blanket name of *P. wittmanniana*. But the listing for sale of any type of *P. wittmanniana* seed has always been enough to catch my interest. The approach was to plant seeds and to acquire plants of anything claiming to be *P. macrophylla*, *P. wittmanniana*, *P. steveniana*, or *P. tomentosa*. From those that survived, perhaps I would have something close to Saunders *P. macrophylla*.

Saunders *P. macrophylla* is almost certainly one of the following three scientifically named plants. Using the current nomenclature of Hong deYuan these are:

1. *Paeonia daurica ssp tomentosa*
2. *Paeonia daurica ssp macrophylla*
3. *Paeonia daurica ssp wittmanniana*

It seems likely that seedlings grown here have included all of these subspecies, but not all have survived. This unscientific statement is based simply on a careful comparison of photos of my plants to the photos in ***Peonies of the World*** by Hong deYuan⁽²⁾. But we also need to remember that the botanist who named *P. macrophylla* was Henry Andrews (1794 – 1830), a man who didn't know Saunders, and vice versa, so there is no compelling reason to believe that Andrews' *P. macrophylla* necessarily coincides with Saunders *P. macrophylla*. That's enough about nomenclature; let's get back to what can be done in the garden with the plants one can get in the current era.

The tetraploid *P. daurica ssp.* plants are not that easy to grow. Winter wet combined with cold is fatal, and for me, cornfield conditions have invariably led to a steady decline and death. Right now I have only two tetraploid plants of the *P. daurica ssp.* group, and photos of those two are included in this article. One is a Galen Burrell plant from the 1990s kept under the name Witty, used several times on *P. lactiflora*, and numerous times on tetraploids of various sorts, all without remarkable results. Witty is probably an example of *Paeonia daurica ssp wittmanniana*. The other more promising candidate is a single specimen kept under the name Mac_WM, which stands for "Macrophylla_Will McLewin", grown from seed acquired in 2010. Mac_WM may be an example of *Paeonia daurica ssp tomentosa*. Mac_WM first bloomed in 2021, with one flower, in 2022 with three flowers, and in 2023 with five flowers. It has not made any of its own seed yet, but its pollen works well. Mac_WM has reasonably large, broad, acuminate leaves of the right form, smells of boxwood in the warm sun, and has one flower per stem. I have not counted chromosomes yet because that procedure destroys a flower bud, and pollen is valuable.

When a new species plant blooms for the very first time, the question arises, "How are you going to use its limited pollen?". In my case, when it became

clear that Mac_WM was actually going to open its first flower in 2021, and it might be the holy grail, I reviewed the crosses of Saunders.

For me, the sentimental favorite cross to repeat has always been *P. obovata willmottiae* x *P. macrophylla*. Saunders produced only one plant of this type which he named '**Silver Dawn**' (1949), and by all accounts it was a great beauty. To the best of my knowledge there are no plants of '**Silver Dawn**' alive today. I would have gladly settled for a more modest success, but I actually ended up with 175 seeds from this chosen combination (nine crosses on three different plants of (tetraploid) *P. obovata*). Most of these have come up and are still doing well in their seedling boxes; I hope to write about them in the future. Of course, my deepest hope is that Mac_WM is nearly equivalent to Saunders *P. macrophylla*, so that these seedlings mirror '**Silver Dawn**'.

As a matter of record, here is a table showing plants which might have been close to Saunders *P. macrophylla*. Short-lived seedlings and failed germinations account for another 5 to 10 seeds, bringing the total number of attempts to well over 19.

Name	Source	Alive	Notes	Photo
<i>wittmanniana</i>	Irmtraud Rieck	No	Diploid <i>daurica</i>	Figure 1
Witt_LL	Russian Bot Gard	No	Short-lived, never bloomed	
Witt <i>tomentosa</i>	Seed	No	Bloomed, used a little	Figure 2
Witty	Galen Burrell	Yes	Bloomed, used	Figure 3
<i>tomentosa</i> wild-coll	Will McLewin	No	Bloomed, short-lived	
Mac_S1	GG15	Yes	Looks <i>officinalis</i> -related	
Mac_S2	GG15	Yes	Looks <i>officinalis</i> -related	
Mac_WM	Will McLewin	Yes	Best candidate	Figure 4
Macro1	Galen Burrell	No	Bloomed, used a little	Figure 5
Macro2	Galen Burrell	No	Bloomed, used a little	
Macro	Harvey Buchite	Yes	Macro hybrid, 2 fl/stem	
<i>steveniana</i>	Galen Burrell	No	Short-lived	Figure 6
<i>macrophylla</i> internet	Russia	No	No germination	



Figure 1



Figure 2

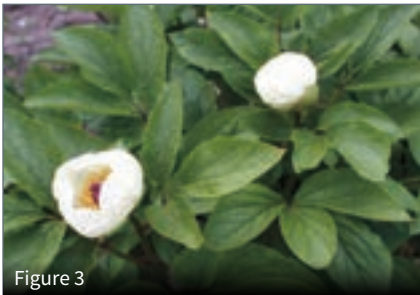


Figure 3

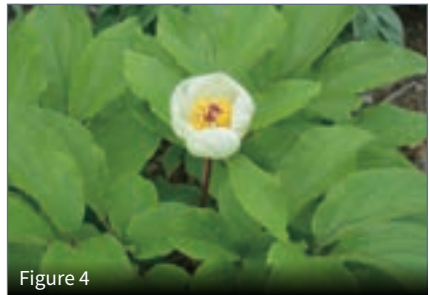


Figure 4

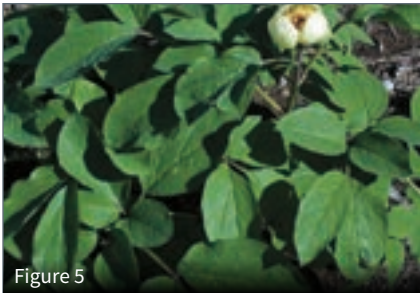


Figure 5

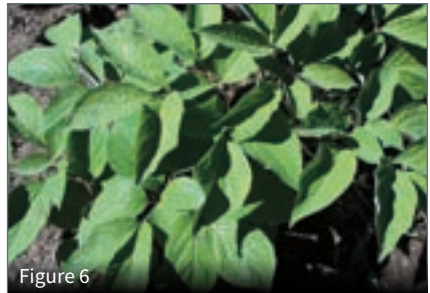


Figure 6

In summary, this article presents some historical data regarding Saunders' use of his form of *P. macrophylla*. Given that the Saunders *P. macrophylla* plants are no longer alive, I propose a method of testing any qualifying current era plant to see if it may be closely related to Saunders *P. macrophylla*. I look forward to a time about five years from now when there will be data from the project.

References

- (1) Garden notebooks and index cards, Saunders Family Papers, Archives of Hamilton College, Clinton, NY
- (2) Peonies of the World: Taxonomy and Phytogeography, 2010, Kew Publishing, Royal Botanic Gardens, Richmond, Surrey, UK

Peony Gardening in the Time of Climate Change

Myra Froc – Lumsden, Saskatchewan, Canada

Last year was a year of extremes — a situation affecting how we manage our peony gardens here in a glaciated valley on the semi-arid plains of continental North America. But we weren't alone. This was a global phenomenon.

The summer of 2023, June through to the end of September and well into October, has been the warmest in 120,000 years in the northern hemisphere. This statement is based on scientific data gathered from paleontological studies of polar ice caps, coral reefs, tree rings and ocean sediment, as well as extensive data collected from satellites, weather stations, ships and aircraft from around the world.⁽¹⁾

The global climate is not only warming, but warming unevenly. Some areas experienced a hot dry spring while others have had cool wet spring weather. Environment Canada senior climatologist Dave Phillips totalled the number of warm temperature records set in Canada in the summer of 2023 versus the number of cold records. You would think there would have been more balance between cold and hot records, but that was not

the case. According to Phillips, there were 372 new hot-temperature marks and only 55 cold records broken.⁽²⁾

Additionally, the weather is becoming unpredictable. Extreme events such as high winds, tornadoes, downpours, flooding, hail and wildfires due to blistering heat were made worse by a 'super' El Niño event caused by overheated waters in the Pacific.

We may look back upon the summer of 2023 and remember how relatively cool it was even in 35°C (95°F) heat — it wasn't, but it could have been worse! Or how dry it was through July and August in spite of a few torrential downpours; in fact, we have decided that here in Zone 3b of the Qu'Appelle Valley of southern Saskatchewan, Canada, we must prepare for an uncertain future by mitigating our approaches to the way we care for our so far largely drought-resistant peony gardens.

Gazing into a crystal ball, what might we expect this year and in years to come? We already know that the growing season is becom-

ing longer with fewer evening frosts and more warm-to-extremely hot days. Wildfires will continue to ravage dry forested areas of Canada, the U.S., Australia and many other countries worldwide.

Without a doubt, we will have freeze-thaw cycles during late fall and early spring months which will damage stems on woody (tree) peonies and extended warm trends in the fall that will cause premature over-production of new foliage and bud growth. The increased heat will also cause high evaporation and insufficient amounts of precipitation in some areas to compensate for it.

As we flew over the Rockies six times this summer, I watched the snowpack practically disappear by the time of our last flight in mid-September. That snowpack, including the Columbia Icefield, feeds main river systems flowing through Western Canada and to the Hudson Bay.

During our northern travels by ship during the same time period, I saw receding snowpack and glaciers when we reached as far north as Hoonah at Icy Point in Alaska. At the rate the glaciers were calving along the whole Alaskan coast, it made me wonder if the northern part of the west coast of North America was also heating at an unusually rapid rate.

In fact, waters off all three coasts of the continent have never been warmer. According to the most recent data collected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Pacific coast is between 2°Celsius (3.6°F) and 4°C (7.2°F) warmer, while the Atlantic and Arctic coasts of the continent are up 5°C (9°F) from average. Hurricanes and typhoons are more likely to develop in these super-heated waters.⁽³⁾

An upward temperature trend in oceans means that the effects of climate change we are already seeing will likely grow more severe in coming years, especially if human activity — like my unexpectedly frequent flights — continues to increase greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2015, researchers at the University of Saskatchewan predicted that the Rocky Mountains would lose up to 90 per cent of their glaciers by 2100. You might think this number sounds pessimistic, but in fact, it may have been overly optimistic.

Dr. John Pomeroy, Canada Research Chair in Water Resources and Climate Change has now suggested that “faster-than-expected melting in the past few years makes it likely that ALL the glaciers of the Rockies will be gone by the end of the century, save for a few remnants.” For peony gardeners in the prairies east of the Rockies,

that means river water, lakes and groundwater from wells will also become increasingly scarce resources for our peony gardens.⁽⁴⁾

What about capturing rainwater from the roofs of our homes, garden sheds and garages? We have been extremely fortunate to have been able to capture 13,000 to 15,000 gallons of rainwater from buildings on our acreage each year over the last four years, and every drop was used on peony beds. But can we count on spring rains every year? Likely not.

Dr. Pomeroy suggests that rain will be abundant some years, while other years we can expect very dry conditions, alternating between deluge and extreme drought. We

can still expect severe winter snow events as well, and cold spells. It's not just that seasonal average temperatures are going to be warmer.

That brings us back to the only constant in climate change — its unpredictability. The solution seems to call for being prepared for a variety of potentially extreme situations affecting our peony gardens.

But not all is doom and gloom. I surveyed peony gardeners across several social media groups last summer and found them to have innovative methods to share. What follows are some of their current strategies, as well as some of our own that mitigate against the extreme effects of climate change:

Heat

- install shade cloth screens, both vertical and angled
- place white shade umbrellas and raised white sheets over peony beds
- plant trees at strategic locations to provide some shade (and wind protection)
- seed ground cover plantings such as wild strawberries, herbs and alfalfa between plants to shield the soil and peony roots from hot sun
- spread light-coloured mulch around, not on, peony crowns and surrounding area to reduce moisture evaporation
- water at the base of the peony in the evening, rather than at midday when air temperatures are much hotter

Drought

- catch rooftop rainwater in barrels and/or tanks
- avoid planting peonies close to large trees and/or other competing plants

- plant drought-resistant peony cultivars such as herbaceous hybrid **'Pink Cotton Candy'** (Reath, 2000), thank you, Nick Maycher! and **'Gay Paree'** (Auten, 1933), thank you Gene Froc!
- install drip irrigation systems
- use watering bags or drip bottles to keep the soil moist
- place pot collars around peony crowns to serve as water reservoirs during watering and for water conservation
- plant ground cover crops to prevent moisture evaporation
- build healthier soil by adding compost and well-rotted manure to retain moisture
- pile shovelled snow on peony beds to improve spring soil moisture
- plant roots in pre-dug holes that have been well watered in the weeks prior to planting — a layman's soil permeability test will tell you how dry your soil really is

Downpours and Flooding

- install French drains as gardeners do in Western Europe
- plant in raised beds with good drainage
- dig drainage ditches and/or swales; provide erosion protection on them such as geotextiles and/or coarse gravel cover

Violent Storms with High Winds

- plant windbreaks and shelter belts
- firmly attach shade cloth to fences to lessen the effects of wind damage
- build wood fences facing prevailing winds

More Frequent Hail

- keep tarps handily accessible for quickly covering plants
- monitor local weather forecasts

Unanticipated Late Spring Night Frosts

- use compressed cardboard covers such as 'Rose Huts[®]' or 'Rhodo Cones[®]' (held down with bricks, stones or tent pegs)
- drape frost cloth over plants

- keep a supply of pails, boxes, half barrels and old Styrofoam® coolers on hand as temporary covers

New Insect Pests

Some gardeners report seeing new pests (Spongy Moth and Asian Gypsy Moth) entering their growing zones.

- amend soil with compost and well-rotted manure to grow stronger, more resistant plants
- hang cards of benevolent insect eggs in the garden (e.g., green lacewings for more severe thrip infestations)
- spread cedar mulch, spruce needles or Ecobran® to repel grasshoppers and many other pests

New Viral and Fungal Diseases

Increasingly, there are reports of seeing new diseases such as TRV or Mosaic Virus previously uncommon in their zones, as well as southern blight moving north.

- be on the lookout for plants that appear to be diseased
- test suspected disease with reputable technicians in a lab setting
- disinfect garden tools between plants with a bleach solution
- destroy viral-diseased plants by removal and burning
- order roots from trusted suppliers
- water at the base of peony plants to prevent fungus, rather than overhead watering
- do not compost leaves and stems; dispose of them in appropriate ways

Wildfire Smoke and Ash

- use frost cloth covers to keep ash off plants
- use a leaf blower on low speed to remove heavy ash
- wash smoke residue off plants with a gentle spray from a garden hose

Accordingly, peony gardening in the time of climate change, much like the machinations in the novel *Love in the Time of Cholera*, is in the end a love story inspired by a continuing passion for peonies that engenders hope instead

of despair. Planting more peonies is in itself a highly optimistic and caring act in that each mature plant uses up to 5 kilograms of CO2 every year. I leave you to it!

Photos courtesy Myra and Gene Froc



The Froc garden in the top tier of the south Qu'Appelle Valley in Saskatchewan.



Snowpacks and glaciers are receding at a faster-than-expected rate, impacting available water.



Capturing a supply of seasonal rainwater from buildings helps mitigate drought.



Angled shade cloth shields peonies from heat.



Ground cover plantings, like wild strawberries, protect soil and roots from hot sun.



Wind breaks and shelter belts lessen the affects of violent storms with high winds.

The Importance of Cultivar Selection

As Zhou and Huang discovered in their 2021⁽⁵⁾ research on the effects of global warming on peony survival, the following paeonia species have an excellent tolerance for heat (note that they also have researched and made lists of moderately heat resistant and poor heat resistant species plants).

P. arietina

P. broteri

P. cambessedesii

P. corsica

P. daurica ssp daurica

P. hybrida

P. mascula ssp hellenica

P. officinalis ssp officinalis

P. mascula ssp russoi

P. peregrina

P. morisii

P. sandrae

P. officinalis ssp italica

P. tenuifolia

P. officinalis ssp microcarpa

P. velebitensis

Their conclusions? Zhao and Huang call on hybridizers to consider this list of species peonies as possible cross parents, knowing that some hybridizations may well be impossible or at least extremely difficult. They argue that technologies such as germ implants and embryo rescue will improve the efficacy of heat-resistant peony germ plasma innovation, thus increasing overall polyploidy in hybridized cultivars. In the long term, it is anticipated that their work may be encouraging⁽⁶⁾.

Links

(1) Climate Central

<https://www.climatecentral.org/climate-matters/more-extremely-hot-days-2023>

(1) Climate Analyzer

https://climatereanalyzer.org/clim/t2_daily/?dm_id=world

(1) Copernicus Climate Centre

<https://climate.copernicus.eu/esotc/2022>

(2) Climatologist and Temperature Records

<https://globalnews.ca/news/9879944/canada-2023-screaming-climate-change-say-scientists/>

(3) National Centres for Environmental Information

<https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/monitoring/monthly-report/global/202307>

(4) Canada in the Year 2060

<https://macleans.ca/society/environment/canada-in-the-year-2060>

(5) Lists of Drought Tolerant Species Paeonia

<https://www.peonysociety.eu/drought-tolerant-peony-species/>

(6) Effects of Global Warming on Peony Survival

https://www.e3s-conferences.org/articles/e3sconf/pdf/2021/28/e3sconf_pgsge2021_03056

Minnesota Peony Society

Mary Schwartzbauer, President – mnpeony.org

While this has been one hot and dry growing season, it doesn't appear to have dried up anyone's gardening desire! Most of us seemed to adjust our gardening schedules to make more use of the early morning and closer to sunset times to give us a cooler working experience.

As the season winds down, the lack of long outdoor days increased our excitement for our annual auction and a successful event was held at Bachman's Garden Center in Minneapolis on September 30. Nicety-six donations resulted in \$7,967.

Thank you to all of those who donated, those who bid and a special thanks to chairs David and Linette Sorrentino, and auctioneers Scott Parker and Nate Bremer. A great time was had by all. Some interesting and sometimes lively bidding often yielded a lower priced plant bringing in a high amount and a higher valued plant bringing in a smaller end bid. Go figure! I guess that's part of what makes it exciting! You never know what's going to happen!

On the business front, we've rounded out our board with the election of Mary Muellner as recording secretary and Mark Rentsch as newsletter editor. We voted to approve funds to sponsor the APS 2024 convention hospitality suite and more as needed and planning for that special event remains on track and will be heating up as the time draws near. Stay tuned for more information - we are planning a great time for everyone! 🌸

Advertise in The APS Bulletin!

Commercial members of the American Peony Society are invited to advertise in *The Bulletin*. For rates and details please contact editor@americanpeonysociety.org



Duluth Peony Society

Don Kienholz and Elizabeth Donley- www.facebook.com/duluthpeonysociety

Our peony garden in the park, by the lake, suffered some vandalism 2 winters ago. The woody peonies were stripped of their wrappings to be used as shelter. As a result, we lost '**Rocks Variety**' and two others were damaged enough to not bloom for the past two years.

Two bloomed as usual this past season, two are recovering, and a new plant will be added to replace '**Rocks Variety**' a.k.a. '**Joseph Rock**.'

Lessons all around. The beauty continues. the sedum 'Autumn Joy' stole the show in the Duluth Peony Garden.

Don and I are hoping to have our root planting demo meeting within the next two weeks: always weather depending, but planned. 🇺🇸



Peony Society of Maine

Nita Stormann, President – president@peonysocietyofmaine.net

The Peony Society of Maine (PSM) held its annual member only auction September 26th with 41 in attendance. We met at the Penobscot County Conservation Association's building along the Penobscot River in Brewer, Maine. There was some competition among the lively group as our entertaining past president Glen Gaspar acted as auctioneer. With many different varieties and types of peonies auctioned there were no disappointments seen. Some of the highest bids were directed towards **'Wisteria Reflections,' 'Strawberry Blush,' 'Smokey Mountain' and 'Scrumdiddlyumptious.'** We appreciate all the companies from Maine and outside the state that donated peonies for this event.

This year, PSM donated 14 peonies from members' and friends' gardens to five nonprofit organizations throughout the state. Anne Mundy coordinated our giveaway project and delivered the peonies from Patten to Paris, Maine. A PSM plaque was donated to be displayed next to the plant.

Our yearly election of officers in September resulted in the following changes. Nita Stormann, President for the second year; Fran Day, Vice President for the second year; newly elected Lynn Anderson, Secretary; and Jamie Cronin, Treasurer. The newly elected board will resume their duties in January, 2024 for one year.





We organized two digging, dividing and planting workshops this year. The first one was held September 9th as part of University of Maine's Demonstration Gardens' Field Day event in Stillwater, Maine. PSM members volunteered to assist as Nita Stormann and Fran Day demonstrated dividing and

planting peonies. Twenty individuals attended and participated in our two-hour event. All participants went home with a peony tuber to plant, an instruction pamphlet on planting, compost and smiles on their faces.

The second one was held on September 30th at members Marylynn and Joe Hunter's beautiful and bold all purpose garden in Eddington, Maine.

This was an invitation especially for new members to join other members in a first hand experience with digging up, dividing and planting peonies. 🌱

Pacific Northwest Peony Society

Steve Smith, President – snlgardens@gmail.com

The Pacific Northwest Peony Society held its fall meeting on November 18th, 2023 from 9am-5pm for all things peony. Our meeting was held at the D.F. Allmendinger Center located at 2606 West Pioneer, Puyallup, WA 98371. This is also the home of WSU Puyallup Research and Extension Center. Topics for advanced and novice growers included a root dividing demonstration; grafting woody peonies; peony diseases by Gary Chastanger, a researcher at Washington State University; a review of the APS Convention in Syracuse, New York and more.

One of the big draws for our local events is the silent and live auctions, where bidders have an opportunity to take home some rare finds that day with their winning bid! A reminder that if members have extra roots in the fall or anything garden related, why not consider donating an item to the auction? These auctions are PNP's only fundraising opportunities and keep events like this happening. Friends and non-members are welcome. We look forward to seeing you in 2024! 🌱

Canadian Peony Society

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT BRIAN PORTER

The Canadian Peony Society has named Brian Porter as the 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award winner.

Brian, a professional horticulturist, is the co-founder of the Regina Peony Society which then became the Prairie Peony Society, and past president of both the Prairie and Canadian Peony Societies.

He has been instrumental in the staging of more than two decades of peony shows held in Regina, including three national shows. His involvement with peonies goes back many years. Brian became the unofficial curator of the Agriculture Canada peony gardens at Indian Head and helped to relocate the peonies in 1994.

He has organized distribution of peonies to various existing public peony gardens in Canada and “saved” many peonies when peony gardens were slated for removal. Brian has shared his knowledge and love of peonies through his many peony articles, editing of the Prairie Peony Society newsletter, and webinar presentations on heritage peonies. Thank you, Brian, for your amazing contributions to the peony world.



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT REINER JAKUBOWSKI

Reiner Jakubowski is the winner of the Canadian Peony Society’s 25th Anniversary Distinguished Service Award. This award recognizes Reiner as a person who has made an outstanding contribution to the peony world in many different roles. Reiner served in many capacities on the CPS board, serving as president as early as 2000, and later as sec-

retary and membership coordinator. He has put in countless hours on behalf of the Society. In 2020 Reiner registered the beautiful 'Castlegar' Itoh peony. Reiner has also been very active with the American Peony Society and served as the peony cultivar registrar for the International Cultivar Registration Authority (IRCA) for 18 years. During that time, he instituted a more detailed registration format and processed approximately 800 new peonies. Thank you, Reiner, for your contribution to the growth and development of all things peony! 🌸



Wisconsin Peony Society

Michelle Ovans, President - wipeonysociety.org

Preparing for the winter season, the Wisconsin Peony Society held its annual Root Auction on October 7, 2023. This auction would not have been a success without the contributions from many of the APS Commercial Grower Members and WPS members.

This year in Wisconsin, most all regions experienced drought conditions. This made for digging very challenging for root harvesting, processing and planting.

As a grower of cut flowers, I found that these extreme weather patterns bring thoughts about how we change in the ways we care for our peonies. It also raises questions of how can we better prepare for continued weather changes from what is considered to be “normal” growing conditions.

Here in Wisconsin, irrigation of field-grown peonies is typically not a consideration, because we *normally* received adequate rainfall during

the growing season. The last four years' lack of rainfall and duration of high temperatures do showcase how hardy peonies are - but how long do we wait to see the long-term effects? Here at Ovans Peony Farm, we have installed a drip irrigation system to supplement our rainfall. This was part of our initial design plans in anticipation of the possibility for the need of irrigation.

This fall, we started to implement our plans for this irrigation system. We are not a large farm and only have 1,500 peonies in cut flower production, but because irrigation was a part of our initial plans, implementation has not been that difficult to accomplish, except for the extreme digging conditions!

Can we expect these extreme weather conditions in the future? I have no idea, but I can anticipate that we will have years when I will be grateful for the ability to turn on the irrigation during the active growth phase and setting of the buds for the next years bloom cycle, with the attempt to keep my peonies productive and beautiful for years to come. 🇺🇸



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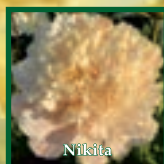
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things – patience, love and someone who
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—Nicolette Sowder



Photo credit Jill Stevens