

PLINY'S ENCYCLOPAEDIA

Nature's miracles

NATURAL HISTORY: BOOK 19

Nature in the garden (19.49-189)

49 It remains to turn back from these plants to Garden Care. Its own nature itself makes it a must to recount. Besides which, Antiquity rated no wonder higher than the Garden of the Hesperides, of King Adonis, and of King Alcinous; and the Hanging Gardens - whether built by Semiramis or by Syrus

COLUMELLA TEN

Flowery verse

WORLD OF THE COUNTRYSIDE: BOOK 10

(1)

Preface

1 Your interest, Woody. 1 I pledged it you when you did the contract. Now be in full receipt of the outstanding wee dollop of payment. For in my nine books to date I have paid my due, minus this fraction: I do now pay up in full.

So, now, the negative balance outstanding is horticulture. Low energy and neglected by the ancient farmers of old. Today up there with even the most densely visited sites.

The reasons for this? Among people long ago, resource management used to mean more thrift. But those on low incomes actually had more lavish dining practices. Why? Because milk supplies, and meat from game and domestic animals, like water and corn, allowed tolerable diets for the highest and for the 2 lowest. In time, succeeding generations, above all our own, fixed feasts at depraved prices. Dinners are now rated in terms not of natural needs but of property ratings. Low-budget masses are herded away from high-price foodstuff and driven to down-3 market food. That is why *Garden Care*, since produce has an increased role in current practices, must be more carefully prescribed by us than our ancestors handed it down.

WITH PALLADIUS

A year in the garden

THE WORK OF AGRICULTURE (SELECTIONS ON THE GARDEN)

(1)

On the spot for a garden and an orchard, on hedges and sowing (1.34)

1 § Garden and orchard must be very close to home - the garden best of all lying below the byre, whose liquid feed will of its own accord fertilize it. Sited a long way from the threshing floor, as it finds chaff dust hostile.

2 § A good luck site has a gently sloping level which sluices off channels of running water through zoned areas. If a spring is lacking, either a well needs sinking or, if you can't manage this, a fishpond must be built higher up, so that when rainfall brings it in water, the garden is watered through the heat of summer. If you lacked all these possibilities, you'll dig a little garden three or four foot down, 1 just like trenching - cultivated this way it can forget about spells of drought.

3 NB Although any type of earth suits this if helped by dung to counter need, yet these kinds are to be avoided if there's a choice: the clay we call potter's, and 'red earth'.

For a garden unaided by natural water, you'll keep watch on turning the space for cultivation with half in winter to south, half in summer to north.

By means of microscopic observation and astronomical projection the lotus flower can become the foundation for an entire theory of the universe and an agent whereby we may perceive Truth.

- Yukio Mishima

It isn't that I don't like sweet disorder, but it has to be judiciously arranged.

- Vita Sackville West

Poetry is the art of creating imaginary gardens with real toads.

- Marianne Moore

A garden without its statue is like a sentence without its verb.

- Joseph W. Beach

I believe it is no wrong Observation, that Persons of Genius, and those who are most capable of Art, are always fond of Nature, as such are chiefly sensible, that all Art consists in the Imitation and Study of Nature. On the contrary, People of the common Level of Understanding are principally delighted with the Little Niceties and Fantastical Operations of Art, and constantly think that finest which is least Natural.

- Alexander Pope, 1713

We have learned that more of the "earth-earthisness" would solve our social problems, remove many isms from our vocabulary, and purify our art. And so we often wish that those who interpret life for us by pen or brush would buy a trowel and pack of seeds.

- Ruth R. Blodgett (1883-), *The House Beautiful* (March 1918)

Liberal gardeners are people who feel that, through gardening, we can alleviate our sense of alienation from nature; and that, through good gardening, we can repair some of the damage we have done to our environment. The most extreme liberals believe that there is an original or a natural state in which the environment would be if we hadn't shown up on the scene, and that we have not only the ability but also a moral imperative to help nature return to this state.

- Deborah Needleman

In the creation of a garden, the architect invites the partnership of the Kingdom of Nature. In a beautiful garden the majesty of nature is ever present, but it is nature reduced to human proportions and thus transformed into the most efficient haven against the aggressiveness of contemporary life.

- Luis Barragán, Mexico

Gardening as far as Gardening is Art, or entitled to that appellation, is a deviation from nature; for if the true taste consists, as many hold, in banishing every appearance of Art, or any traces of the footsteps of man, it would then be no longer a Garden.

- Joshua Reynolds, Thirteenth Discourse, 1786

There is no "The End" to be written, neither can you, like an architect, engrave in stone the day the garden was finished; a painter can frame his picture, a composer notate his coda, but a garden is always on the move.

- Mirabel Osler

Even while we study and master the individual tasks and lessons of gardening, the garden remains as a place that is far greater than the sum of its parts. After plant infatuations, color schemes, and double digging, there is still the essence of the garden, the central theme that invites our attention. Happily, the exploration and creation of the garden goes on. . . . and on . . . and on. . .

- Lynn Purse, *The Creative Gardener*

Nothing is more completely the child of art than a garden.

- Sir Walter Scott

To tell you the truth, my tenants have a notion that I am atheistically inclined, by putting up heathen statues and writing on them certain words in an unknown language. They immediately suspected me for a papist, and my statues had been demolished, my woods burnt and my throat cut had not I suddenly placed a seat under a holly bush with this plain inscription, "Sit Down and Welcome." I have assured them that all the Latin mottoes are to this purpose, and

that in places where they cannot sit down, I have desired them in the old Norman dialect to go to the lodge, and drink whiskey.

- Lord John Orrey (1707-1762), Letters

Poets and novelists are often moved to put into words the subtle qualities of the landscape, sometime

purely for the beauty of it, and sometimes as a way of alluding to certain human feelings.

Landscape

design can translate such literary landscapes into three-dimensional form in the garden. Like the

poet, the garden designer may allude to human feelings in his portrayals of nature.

- David S. Slawson, *Secret Teachings in the Art of Japanese Gardens*, 1987, p. 131

Beauty is the adjustment of all parts proportionately so that one cannot add or subtract or change without impairing the harmony of the whole.

- Leon B. Alberti

The work of art is born of the intelligence's refusal to reason the concrete. It marks the triumph of the carnal.

- Albert Camus

We have art in order not to perish of truth.

- Friedrich Nietzsche

Every garden is unique with a multitude of choices in soils, plants and themes. Finding your garden theme is as easy as seeing what brings a smile to your face.

- Teresa Watkins, *Gardening With Soul*

Remember that gardeners generally want to share knowledge and hear your comments, so don't be shy about starting a conversation. Like artists, most gardeners want to know how their creation communicates with the viewer. See if you can discover the spirit and vision behind the garden and reflect on what is moved within you.

- Suzanne Edison, *Ask Questions*

Don't underestimate the therapeutic value of gardening. It's the one area where we can all use our nascent creative talents to make a truly satisfying work of art.

Every individual, with thought, patience and a large portion of help from nature, has it in them to create their own private paradise: truly a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.

- Geoff Hamilton, *Paradise Gardens*, 1997

Fine art is that in which the hand, the head, and the heart of man go together.

- John Ruskin

A statue in a garden is to be considered as one part of a scene or landscape.

- Shenstone

Aesthetics is for the artists as ornithology is for the birds.

- Barnett Newman

It has been the office of art to educate the perception of beauty. We are immersed in beauty but our eyes have no clear vision.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Art consists of limitation. The most beautiful part of every picture is the frame.

- G. K. Chesterton

Good planting design does not follow a formula. At best, it allows you to experiment with nature and through nature to make an original statement. As in all of the arts, the best garden designers take risks. Only by taking risks can you come up with something exciting and original.

- James Van Sweden

What we call yugen lies within the mind and cannot be expressed in words. Its quality may be suggested by the sight of a gauzy cloud veiling the moon or by the autumnal mists swathing the scarlet leaves on a mountainside. If one is asked where yugen can be found in these sights, one cannot say; a man who cannot understand this truth is quite likely to prefer the sight of the moon shining brightly in a cloudless sky. It is quite impossible to explain wherein lies the interest or wonder of yugen.

- Shotetsu, in Donald Keene's *No: The Classical Theatre of Japan*.

Texture and foliage keep a garden interesting through the season.

Flowers are just moments of gratification.

- Kevin Doyle

The garden must first be prepared in the soul first

or else it will not flourish.

- Proverb from England

The Japanese garden is a very important tool in Japanese architectural design because, not only is a garden traditionally included in any house design, the garden itself also reflects a deeper set of cultural meanings and traditions.

Whereas the English garden seeks to make only an aesthetic impression, the Japanese garden is both aesthetic and reflective. The most basic element of any Japanese garden design comes from the realization that every detail has a significant value.

- Elizabeth Barber, *The Shiga Project: The Japanese Garden*

Gardens are the result of a collaboration between art and nature.

- Penelope Hobhouse

If the art of gardening is at last to turn back from her extravagances and rest with her other sisters, it is, above everything, necessary to have clearly before you what you require . . . It is certainly tasteless and inconsistent to desire to encompass the world with a garden-wall, but very practicable and reasonable to make a garden . . . into a characteristic whole to the eye, heart, and understanding alike.

- Schiller

In his garden every man may be his own artist without apology or explanation. Each within his green enclosure is a creator, and no two shall reach the same conclusion; nor shall we, any

more than other creative workers, be ever wholly satisfied with our accomplishment. Ever a season ahead of us floats the vision of perfection and herein lies its perennial charm.

- Louise Beebe Wilder

The aesthetically literate person also knows that the artistic dimensions of existence have meaning for every sphere of human endeavor ... and that a refined aesthetic sensibility can as easily lead to a cure for cancer as to the composition of a great symphony.

- James Fenwick

Quality means doing it right when no one is looking.

- Henry Ford

The first law of a painting and of a picture on the soil
is to be a whole . . . Without principles and without
discernment one never attains veritable beauty.

- Edouard André

Art brings out the grand lines of nature.

- Antoine Bourdelle

To some, gardening is therapy for the mind.

Art is therapy for my soul.

- Reno

If light is the medium and space is the medium, then, in a sense, the universe is a medium. I know the impracticality of it right now but when I say that the medium is the universe, that maybe the world is an art form, then the gardening of our universe or our consciousness would be the level of our art participation.

Robert Irwin