

Botanophilia and the Evolution of the Nursery Industry in the United States

Session Information

Number: FRI-C07
Date: Friday, 19 October 2018
Time: 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM
Location: 113-AB

Session Description

The US nursery industry we know today evolved from obsessive plant trading between the Colonies and Europe in the 18th Century. This session explores how American botanophilia intersected with innovation and major cultural, industrial, developmental, and political events, to support the proliferation of commercial nurseries and, by extension, landscape architecture.

Speakers

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ASLA
PHL2018

Annual Meeting
and EXPO
October 19-22
Philadelphia

#ASLA2018

Hicks Nursery

Learning Objectives

1. Gain an understanding of the origins of Colonial botanophilia and the means and methods used in the 18th C plant trade between the Colonies and Europe
2. Make connections between the cultural, social, political, and technological developments of the 19th and 20th Centuries that enabled the nursery trade to emerge and flourish throughout the United States.
3. Learn how different generations of landscape architects specified and located plants for their projects.
4. Learn how the environmental movement of the late 20th C. reinvigorated the nursery industry and how landscape architecture continues to enable that expansion.



Key Events

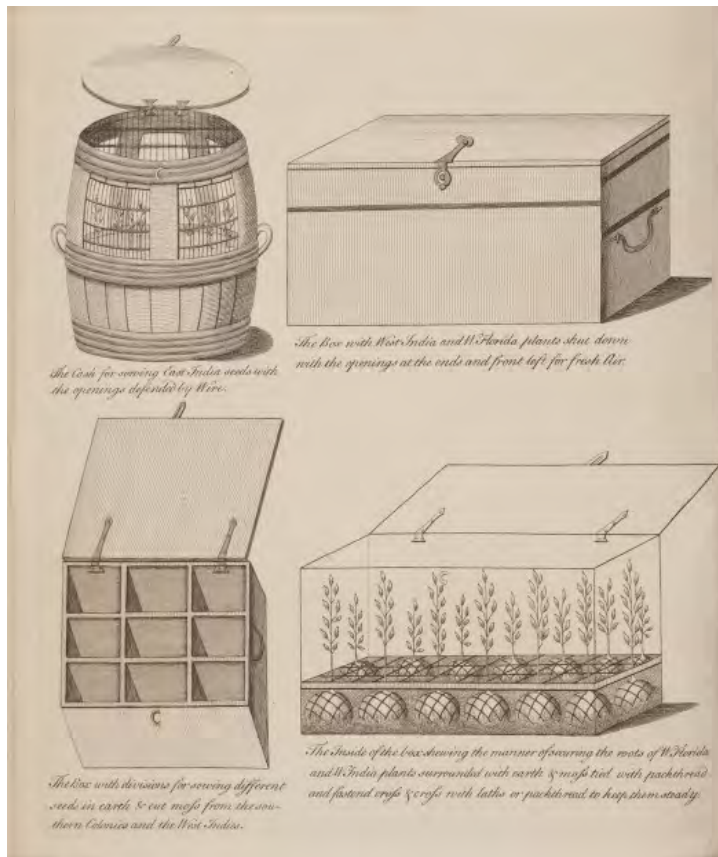
A. Colonial America: A Passion for Plants

- John Bartram; botanist, collector, and the rise of plant exchanges between the Colonies and Europe.
- Prince Nursery, 1737 first Colonial nursery, visited by Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Monroe
- Development of transportation methods for sending plants across oceans.
- Landreth Seed begins, serving the needs of the working class.

B. Post-Revolution America: The Useful and the Beautiful

- George Washington, the plantsman, commits to adding an all-native plant garden to Mount Vernon.
- North American plants find a home in Europe.
- Lewis and Clark Expedition nets a vast collection of seeds and specimens.
- Parsons Nursery, 1838 Flushing, NY and the sale of exotic plants
- Nursery expansion heads to the Midwest and Georgia, Virginia, and South Carolina emerge as centers of exchange and production.
- First plant patent granted

Plant Transportation Containers



Mount Vernon



Key Events

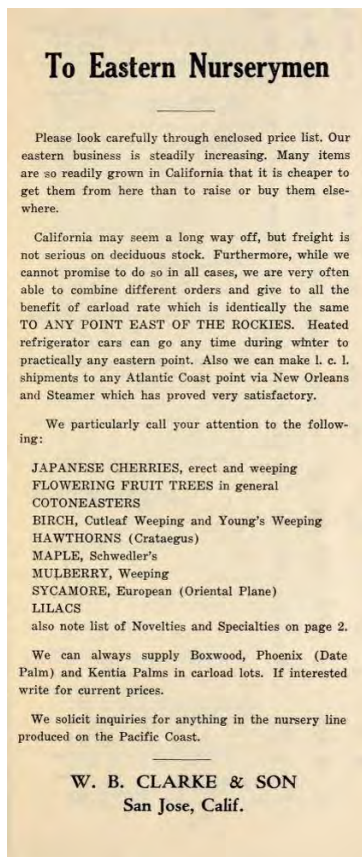
C. The Industrial Revolution: The First Wave of Large Nurseries

- East Coast Nurseries: Thos. Meehan & Sons, Hicks Nursery
- Midwest Nurseries: Swain Nelson Nursery
- West Coast Nurseries: California Nursery Company
- Large tree transplanting techniques appear
- American Association of Nurserymen founded
- Central Park planted

D. 20th Century Burgeoning: Early Regulation and Development

- USDA Forest Service Nursery established
- Agricultural irrigation is automated
- Plant Quarantine Act is the first regulation for importation
- Downing Lay writes “What Nurseries Should Grow”
- “Horticultural Standards for Nursery Stock” first published
- First plant patent granted

Nursery Brochure



Entrance to California Nursery



Key Events

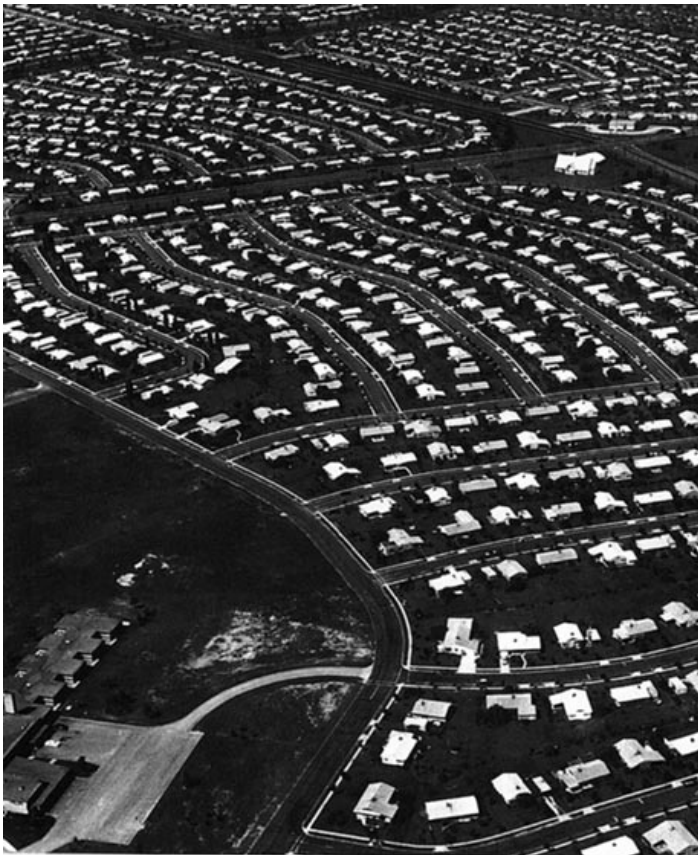
E. Post World War II: The Suburban Garden Boom

- Suburban housing boom produces high demand for nursery stock
- Wholesaler J. Frank Schmidt sells liner stock to nurseries
- Plastic containers enable large scale nursery production
- Halka Nurseries opens
- Federal Highway Act expands plant shipment possibilities

F. A Rising Global Conscience: The Environmental Movement

- Environmental Protection Agency formed
- Prairie Restorations sells restoration forbs and grasses
- Lady Bird John Wildflower center opens
- First National Parks Conservancy
- Stormwater management regulations expand
- Brownfields raise the demand for native plants
- 10,000+ nurseries from coast to coast

Post WWII Housing



Lady Bird Johnson



Wetland Restoration Planting

