

## 1999 Horticulture Field Day

by Linda Daniel, The James River Garden Club

**H**orticulture Field Day 1999 held on June 3 reached a new high in the life of The GCV Horticulture Committee.

The day began at Long Branch, the 1788 home of Robert Carter Burwell. Located 60 miles from Washington, D.C. in the Virginia Hunt Country, the house, completed in 1842, was designed by Minard LaFever whose creations include the United States Capitol Building and portions of the White House. The house is surrounded by gardens dedicated to and containing favorite plant material of noted flower arranger, Sheila MacQueen.

The first garden we visited surrounded Claytonville, owned by Martha Cook (Mrs. William F. Cook, Jr.) of the Winchester-Clarke Garden Club. It is a relatively new home constructed of fieldstone obtained from old barns dating from the 18th century. The grounds and garden were beautifully designed with unusual and creatively placed plant material. The garden contained a pool area, rose garden, herb and vegetable gardens and extensive meadows around the house with perimeters given over to graceful planting areas. Especially breathtaking was the magnificent driveway climbing to the house, perched on a hill, which has a spectacular view of Ashby's Gap.

The garden of Becky McCoy (Mrs. T. Haliburton McCoy) of the Winchester-Clarke Garden Club was the second garden visited. It sur-

rounded Persimmon Hill a new house of traditional architecture typical of the Shenandoah Valley. A small terraced garden was suspended between the house and pool with pristine elegant garden areas containing unusual statues and ornaments. Especially beautiful were six carefully placed "Climbing America" roses.

Garden three was at The Briars a large stucco house built in 1811 and home of Ilona Benham (Mrs. Henry K. Benham III) of the Winchester-Clarke Garden Club. A fieldstone wall, surrounding miles of the property, was constructed during the Revolutionary War by Hessian Prisoners of War. The highlight was the mountain setting with its magnificent rose garden that had to be seen to be believed!

The garden of Marlene DeFries at Annfield was the last garden visited. It was beautifully designed, and though fairly new, had very good "bones." Many specimen annuals and perennials were included, the new ones combined with the traditional ones. This garden carried a feeling of openness.

Truly, the day was an inspiration for those of us who are "dirt gardeners." The love, care and dedication of these gardeners was clearly evident. One needs this sort of day to continue to be inspired to reap the joys and pleasures of collaborating with God in gardening. I would encourage anyone who is interested in gardening to make next year's Horticulture Field Day a priority.

*One needs this sort of day to continue to be inspired to reap the joys and pleasures of collaborating with God in gardening.*