

Horticulture Field Day 2000

by Linda Daniel, The James River Garden Club

Horticulture Field Day was once again the amazing culmination of a gigantic effort of The GCV Horticulture Committee to showcase outstanding gardens of gardeners whose caring and dedication reflect the true meaning of "gardener."

Harrisonburg was the setting with its mountains and spectacular views. The gardens toured included:

1) Mr. and Mrs. Ron Brown - an extensive woodland hillside garden set in a three-acre suburban area.

Many trilliums, ferns, hosta and linaria vied for attention with over 250 tree peonies started from seed, (four years from seed to bloom) by the owner. This garden shows a love for plants that thrive in shade which the Browns share during an "open house" each April and May. This is a true spring garden.

2) Dr. and Mrs Edward Chappell - essentially a formal suburban garden surrounded by a wall. Begun in 1992 this garden imitates the style of Colonial Williamsburg. Landscape architect Jack Douglas assisted the owner with the design. There is a large herbaceous border with a beautiful "volunteer" larkspur backdrop. An arbor anchors a small lawn, and four weeping cherries (cleverly stunted by pruning) guard a lovely fish pond edged in American Box one foot tall. An herb garden abuts the house, and the theme of the entire garden is one of serenity and peace.

3) Dr. and Mrs. David C. Whitehead - this garden demonstrates a most

effective use of a small space. Less than one acre, the garden contains a central lawn surrounded by woodland areas. The front of the house is beautifully screened by a woodland path edged in hosta Royal Standard. Many other hosta varieties are used throughout the garden.

The ornaments here are especially attractive; my favorite area was an "end point" of lawn with azaleas and boxwood staggered on the hillside behind a lovely pedestal fountain are a highlight.

4) Col. And Mrs. Kimberly Babson - 30 years ago this special garden was a field. Today it exhibits the great interest of the owners for specimen plants and native ornamentals. A grove of 116 Black Walnuts honor the 116th Infantry that landed on Normandy. Dominating the garden are three enormous Himalayan rose shrubs. Large loops of grass paths along with ponds encircle the property and house built in 1769.

Lunch was at the Shenandoah Valley Farm of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dixon with a garden featuring unusual trees and many rare species shrubs grown for our National Arboretum. There is an interesting use of stone architectural features throughout.

Horticulture Field Day 2000 was a combination of gardens indicating a serious purpose, careful attention to design, and efforts to garden with a minimum of chemicals. The design of each garden was unique and beautifully executed. Horticulturists who attended were again delighted to be fortunate to share in this day.