



Flower for logo contributed by Brothers Peonies

Pacific Northwest Peony Society Newsletter • Volume 9 • Issue 2 • Fall 2008

## VISITORS FROM CHINA

Professor Fangyun Cheng and Doctor XiaoNan Yu of the Landscape Architecture College at Beijing Forestry University in Beijing, China, were visitors to Oregon at the end of May this year. Prof. Cheng has studied peonies for 20 years and has written a book about Chinese Flare Mudan, or rockii peonies. Dr. Yu teaches at the University where her specialty is landscape trees. Prof. Chen's initial letter stated that he wanted to visit nurseries specializing in woody and shrub ornamental plants and to promote the cut flower growing of peonies in China.

They arrived at PDX on Saturday, May 31st, and were picked up by Mary Mannix, who graciously transported them to Brooks to visit the Adelman nursery. They were delighted to see the bright colors of our hybrid peonies, as China has mostly the lactiflora varieties developed there. They did close observations in the field and were excited by some of the characteristics they found, especially in the intersectionals.

On Sunday, Jim Adelman took them to visit Al and Dot Rogers, as Prof Cheng said that he and Al had corresponded by mail during the writing of Al's book on peonies. After a pleasant visit there, they went on to visit Rick Rogers at his nursery, then to a commercial cut flower grower. After lunch they visited with Therese Sprauer at Brooks Gardens, especially to see the specimen tree peonies there, but had a wonderful discussion on hybridizing and growing peonies from seed. The day concluded with a tour of Brooks Tree Farm and dinner provided by the hosts, Cathy and Dave LeCompte at their home.



Carol, Professor Fangyun Cheng, Jim and Doctor XiaoNan Yu at the APS convention.

Arrangements had been made with the Oregon Department of Agriculture to provide further tours on Monday and Tuesday. Patrick Mayer of ODA toured them to Al's Garden Center in Sherwood and to growers who trade with China.

Prof. Cheng and Dr. Yu then flew to Missouri to visit the Missouri Botanical Garden, and on to Minneapolis for the American Peony Society Convention, where Professor Cheng gave a PowerPoint program on peony breeding in China.

— Carol Adelman

### IN THIS ISSUE:

Visitors from China by Carol Adelman .....	1
Preparing Peonies for Exhibit by Therese Sprauer.....	1
APS Convention Awards.....	2
PNPS Makes Big Showing .....	3
by Jim Sampson	
<i>Did You Know?</i> .....	5
Calendar of Events .....	8

## PREPARING PEONIES FOR EXHIBIT

I'd envisioned attending the APS Convention and exhibiting flowers since I started raising peonies at Brooks Gardens nearly eight years ago. I even made a file several years ago that I would tuck flower entry classification forms and other information into for future reference. I mean, heavens – when the time came, I would be so prepared. Brilliant!

This spring I made plans to attend the convention in Minneapolis. My anticipation for this new experience of getting flowers across the country was simultaneously filled with enthusiasm and nervousness. I contacted Don Hollingsworth, who shared fabulous tips on preparing and shipping flowers for the exhibit.

Preparing Peonies continued on page 6.

Dear Members,

### The PNWPS Annual Meeting

Carsten Burkhardt traveled from Germany to be the keynote speaker at our annual meeting on March 1, 2008. While here, he was able to visit other peony lovers. Rick Rogers picked him up from the airport, toured him around and took him to visit Al and Dot Rogers. They spent a couple of hours together talking about peonies. He spent the next day with Jim and Carol Adelman driving, eating, and talking peonies.

On Saturday he was our key speaker for the day. When he started his presentation he informed us that he came in contact with Peonies some 12 years ago. His wife had bought some peonies, and that he started reading his first book about peonies: Allan Rogers' PEONIES. He showed us a slide show that I had never seen, detailing the places where he has been in his search for species peonies. He knew all the varieties and names thanks to the people that he had spoken with during his travels. He has been all over Europe, Australia, and China.

Now about his Web-project. He has spent the last 10 years building the website, to get all the info about peonies varieties combined. He is doing this in addition to his normal working hours as a dentist. He has a great love for peonies. All of the information that he was communicating that day was almost too much. I am glad that a lot of people took notes.

*Piet Wierstra, President*



## APS CONVENTION AWARDS RE-CAP

Oregon and Washington had a record number of attendees to the APS Convention this year: Jeanne Graves, Therese Sprauer, Fred Berger, Lore and Jim Sampson, Jim and Carol Adelman, and Anna and Richard Tamura. Most were involved with preparing flowers for exhibition. We enjoyed the tours and having wonderful volunteer tour guides and assistance with the exhibits. One of these years we are hoping that the weather will cooperate so the host city will have peonies in full bloom! We know that some of the gardens must have been glorious the week after the convention!

### APS CONVENTION 2008 AWARDS

#### BEST OF SHOW:

**Brother Chuck** (class 115b: lactiflora double, blush) Adelman

#### COURT OF HONOR:

**Raspberry Charm** (class 120d: hybrid, double red) Adelman

**Adonis** (class 115c: lactiflora, light double pink) Mike Miller

#### Duchess de Nemours

(class 117a: lactiflora, bomb, white or blush) Adelman

**Maestro** (class 115e: lactiflora, red double) Hollingsworth

**Summer Glow** (class 120a: hybrid, double, blush) Adelman

**Coral Charm** (class 120b: hybrid, semi-double, coral) Adelman

**Sonoma Halo** (class 125a: Itoh hybrid, yellow) Adelman

**First Arrival** (class 125b: Itoh hybrid, any color) Swenson

#### Souvenir de Maxima de Cornu

(class 134c: lutea hybrid TP, double) Sevald

**KAO** (class 133b: suffruticosa TP, red, semi-double) Sevald

**Kamatanishiki** (class 132b: suffruticosa TP, pink, semi-double) Sevald

#### Ohunin Ohata

(class 131b: suffruticosa TP, white, semi-double) Sevald

#### GOLD MEDAL WINNER AND AWARD OF LANDSCAPE MERIT:

**Salmon Dream** (Reath, 1979)

#### PNPS Officers:

President, Piet Wierstra  
Vice President, Jeanne Graves

Secretary, Therese Sprauer  
Treasurer, Lore Sampson

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#### ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

PLEASE SEND YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS TO THERESE SPRAUER  
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## PNPS MEMBERS MAKE BIG SHOWING AT BIG SHOW

The Pacific Northwest Peony Society was unusually well represented this year at the annual APS convention in Minneapolis. Ten of our members attended what was a spectacular convention both in terms of peony displays, and garden tours if not in hospitable weather. Actually, the weather too, was quite spectacular at times!

Hosted by the Minneapolis Peony Society at the Bloomington Sheraton the convention was the epitome of how to “do it right.” MPS did an exceptionally fine job of planning and producing the convention from a special garden visit opportunity on Thursday, at Hans Hansen’s, for pre-convention arrivals to all-day Sunday self-guided garden visiting for attendees wanting to see everything possible right up to the boarding gate. Sandwiched in between was Friday’s bus tour to local growers Countryside Gardens, and Century Oaks complete with delicious BBQ lunch. Saturday’s exhibition and educational seminars were followed by a social hour, banquet, annual meeting, and APS auction. In addition our hosts had reserved a hospitality room where guests could go for a handful of snacks, a cool beverage and a chance to visit with others.

Let’s start at the beginning. Lore and I arrived on Wednesday a day before the ‘day before’. Shortly after, we ran into Carol Adelman who had come in on the next flight. Carol was on a mission to corner the plastic bin market in Minneapolis and we combined forces to track down a second Target’s store to purchase the remainder of her needs. I’m starting to get a picture of Carol as a one person ‘advance team’ that comes in ahead of time to make the arrange-



Carol Adelman with Sonoma Halo.

ments for the candidate(s) that will soon arrive. Jim Adelman, still in Oregon, oversees the selection and shipping of the hundreds of peony cuts that arrive the next day. With our task accomplished we crisscrossed the outskirts of the city until fate brought us to a delightful Italian restaurant whose wine list featured a Wednesday special. It was a long flight, ‘nuf said.

MPS had arranged a special garden visit to Hans Hanson’s five-acre garden on Clear Lake in Waseca. Hans is past president of MPS and the Director of R&D at the tissue culture lab at Shady Oaks Nursery. Jeanne Graves, had joined us for the drive to Waseca and beyond. Hans’ garden is situated under the canopy of a native hardwood forest of ash, linden, maple and hackberry. In addition to his skills as a propagator

and hybridizer, Hans is a collector and plant hunter of unusual plants from the wilds of Sichuan, Yunnan and South Africa. Freely sharing information, it was clear that he knew each plant in his garden, its habits and its requirements. It was here that we first noted the Martagon lilies that have become so popular in Minnesota for their unusual foliage and ability to bloom well in shady sites. (Add one more to the ‘gotta have ‘em’ list!)

After a brief (so I’m told) detour to Mankato to sate a “yarn emergency” (it wasn’t me) we headed north hoping to drop in on the Kornder’s Brewery Creek Garden Center. We’d been fortunate all day in avoiding the severe storms to the south, but by the time we got to Tim and Lori Kornder’s it was minutes before closing time and inches ahead of the storm. It was dark out as a solar eclipse and with all the drama of a Midwest lightning storm. Tim rushed out to meet us and give us the tornado warning. When he heard we were with the APS he relented just long enough to let us peek at his garden center and drool over a display of his new intersectionals. Returning from a check of the Doppler weather screen he told us, “You’ve got to leave, NOW!” And a good thing, too! Heeding his advice we



Flowers as displayed for judging

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managed to just outrun the storm which broke over us as we crossed the Mississippi coming back into Minneapolis and the security of our hotel.

Regrouping at the hotel, we compared notes with Richard and Anna Tamura who had been with another group, led by Scott Parker. Scott is one of our new best friends! Talk about an enthusiastic gardener and peony fan! Also, by this time, Therese Sprauer had arrived with her own exhibition peonies, and Jim Adelman had flown in, as well.

Driving down from the U.P. of Michigan (with frequent stops at any antique store that dared to get in his way) was our own 'dual citizenship' expat Fred Berger. Completing our 'Council of Ten' was Alana Holste. Alana lives in Kansas City and is a member of the Heartland PS as well as our own PNPS. However, I can't recall any of our regional meetings that she hasn't attended, so I propose we give her—at the very least—a special dispensation, or title, or honorific in acknowledgment. Perhaps; "High Exalted Mid America Member"? Regardless, it was good to see her again! Thus, PNPS can fairly claim 10 members at this year's convention!

Friday, gray skies and rain could have dampened the spirits of the bus tour but these are Peony People we're among. Countryside Gardens in Delano is owned by Laverne and Barbara Dunsmore who operate both garden design/installation and nursery businesses. After a quick inspection of potted peonies ("Lore put those back, we're can't take them on the plane.") we toured the growing fields. Countryside grows over 400 varieties of herbaceous peonies, Itohs and tenuifolias. They have made the Brand peonies and Bob Tishler's a major part of their program and are continuing the quad hybrid programs of A.P. Saunders and Chris

Laning. The cool late spring in Minnesota had made the bloom season delayed and many of the peonies we hoped to see were still in tight bud. Tromping through the fields we did catch a glimpse of the many fernleaves



Brother Chuck

in bloom as well as one of my new favorites, Firelight. Small matter that the rain came upon us here. We took shelter under the tent and in the barn, coffee in one hand, and pastry or brownie in the other. Life is sweet.

Reboarding the coaches we made our way across the countryside through the town of Cologne where Eugene Lins had hybridized peonies and glads. Today Lins' peonies are still to be found in gardens in the area.

Getting to the Kornder's Century Oaks Peony Farm in Jordan in time for a superb BBQ pork luncheon presented a dilemma in that it was difficult to determine the source of our appetite. Was it the delicious food being served by the Minnesota Pork Producers Association, the wine tasting from Fieldstone Vineyards or the dozens of spectacular new intersectionals being introduced by Tim Kornder? After our meal we toured Tim's fields where hundreds of intersectional peonies were in full bloom.

Meanwhile, back at the hotel, things looked BAD! An entire ballroom with row after row of white draped display

tables portended an exhibit-less exhibition. Five divisions (Open, Amateur/Novice, Seedlings/New Cultivars, Special, and Artistic Design); 198 classes! Where are the FLOWERS??? Don't they know entries must be in place by 10 am tomorrow! Wait, this looks encouraging—across the hall a beehive of activity. A breakout room packed to the walls with flowers and exhibitors all busily prepping their stock of possible entries. Retrimming stems, culling some, grooming others. Jim and Carol Adelman with help from Richard and Anna; Therese with Jeanne and Jim and Lore; Hollingsworth Peonies with Don and Luke and Dana; John Eisele from Klehms. Local gardeners and regional growers and major producers all prepared to show us their best.

So, Saturday! What happened? Who won? Who won what? What was the outcome? Well, I can honestly say the our members did PNPS proud! Jim and Carol Adelman won top honors with Brother Chuck which was awarded "Best in Show." They also received Court of Honor in six categories and won top honors for several of their collections. Therese Sprauer from Brooks Gardens made a wonderful showing and has a nice collection of blue ribbons for several entries including Coral Charm and Petticoat Flounce. And, our own Anna Tamura, had reason to smile when she took several ribbons with her exquisite flower arrangements in the Artistic Design division.

For a late spring and limited local bloom the show lacked nothing in the way of impressiveness. True, hundreds of blooms were shipped in yet, there was still a strong showing of local flowers, especially among the novice class entries. In addition to the exhibition we were treated to three seminars on: "Floral Design and Peonies",



Tim Korder and Jim Adelman at Korder's Century Oaks Peony Farm where lunch was served.

“Peonies and Photography” and “Growing Peonies-The Green Way”.

A very special treat from a very special guest was a presentation added to the program at the last minute from Professor Fangyun Cheng. He and Dr. XiaoNan Yu were visiting from China. They stopped and visited in Oregon on their way to the convention. Fangyun gave a slide show summary of ongoing peony research at his facility in China and new evidence of *P. rockii* and *P. delayvii* parentage in many of the nominally *P. suffruticosa* varieties. Cheng is the author of numerous articles on tree peonies as well as the editor and co-author of the book, “Chinese Flare Mudan,” (Aside from the title, the book is written in Chinese.)

Saturday evening concluded with the banquet, meeting and auction. Wonderful food, a brief meeting led by Harvey Buchite and an entertaining auction conducted by Hollingsworth's Luke Hudson concluded a superb day.

I can't conclude without giving a sincere thank you to our hosts. We made new friends and gardening buddies everywhere we went. The Minnesota Peony Society president Linette Sorrentino and her club members encouraged us to bring an APS convention to the Pacific Northwest (think 2011) and were completely generous in their offers to share their experience and blueprint for organizing the event. Scott Parker was an enthusiastic chauffer and garden 'crawler'. And thanks to the many club members who opened their gardens and experience to us and made us welcome everywhere we went.

— Jim Sampson

## Did you know?

- Since ancient times, Peonies have been regarded as the symbol of wealth, luck and happiness



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- Peonies were named in honor of Paeon, the physician of the gods.
- The Chinese call Peonies the King of flowers or the Flower Fairy.
- The Chinese name for peony is “sho yu” which means “most beautiful.”
- The Greeks believed that peonies could cure over 20 ailments, and every monastery garden boasted a peony bush.
- The modern hybrid peony came to Europe in the 6th century as a remedy for epilepsy.
- The peony is a symbol for spring and for female beauty. The peony also represents good fortune and nobility of spirit.
- The peony (*Paeonia*) was adopted as the state flower of Indiana in 1957.
- The peony's ancient Japanese name “Ebisugusuri” literally means “medicine from China”.
- Mischievous nymphs were said to hide in the petals of the Peony thus causing this magnificent flower to be given the meaning of Shame or Bashfulness in the Language of Flowers.
- During the Middle Ages, peony seeds were crushed and used to season stews and meats.

My goal was to select and cut peony buds at the ‘marshmallow’ stage—a bit softer on the full doubles and tighter buds for the singles. I cut stems about 18-20” long, tagged them with their name, and removed most of the leaves, then placed them into buckets with about 2” of water. I set the buckets in a refrigerator. I also use an old beverage (well, it’s a beer) cooler for flower storage. A day or two later (sometimes a week later) I re-cut the stems and placed the flowers into 2-gallon zip-lock freezer bags. I sealed the bags and stacked them up in the fridge. I kept track of the temperature with a thermometer—to be sure they weren’t too warm or freezing (which can happen in a fridge). I became obsessed with checking the temperature on my sometimes fluctuating equipment.

The day before traveling, I filled two small coolers with ice, to cool them down. A few hours before I left for the airport, I dumped out the ice, dried the coolers and placed a couple of frozen ice packs in them. I stacked my bagged specimens into the coolers, taking care not to crush the flowers. At the airport, I checked the coolers as luggage and asked if I could duct tape them shut, which I did. When I arrived at the hotel, I added a small bucket of ice to each cooler, where the flower buds would remain for another day.

The next day we toured Countryside Nursery and Century Oaks Farm and saw some beautiful, tree filled Minnesota country. Back at the hotel in late afternoon, I wheeled the coolers to the prep-room. That’s when the fun started.

There was a small contingency of society members attending from Oregon. A couple of them helped Adelman’s set up flowers and the others had no idea what they were volunteering for when they offered to assist me. In fact, while Lore had attended one of the shows previously, the rest of us were novices. Fear not—I was prepared. I whipped out my APS file and pulled out the flower classification form. We were off and running. We quickly scoped out the scene and asked other exhibitors for guidance. They were willingly helpful and gave us tips and direction. Bottles provided by the Society were filled with water; stems unpacked, re-cut to

about 14” and placed in the bottles. Entry tags provided by APS needed to be prepared with the name of the variety, APS classification number and the entrants name and address. As one of our group organized flowers by variety, I looked up the flower classification and called it out while another team member wrote it on the tag. Another was filling in the Brooks Gardens information. The other growers were

responding to our every question and one fellow, Dana, from Hollingsworth’s crew was especially helpful. He even good naturedly wondered aloud whether we really intended to enter such a funky flower as Green Lotus, when we were determining the correct classification.



Lore Sampson and Therese Sprauer busy labeling flowers.



Show attendees are wowed by the peony exhibit.

After we were nearly finished with the tags (which was the time consuming task), Dana overheard me telling Jeanne that a particular flower was classification 118W. He said there was no 118W, that all the classification numbers had changed several years ago. That’s when I was glad our team was made of mature, patient, non-blood related members. You know the family projects that lead to real war and you wonder if you will all survive? And you know you’re the reason. It turns out that I pulled the 2004 classification form from my, you remember—Brilliant—file. Yep, all the tags had to be re-done. I retrieved the 2008 form from my file and Dana provided additional copies. We buckled down and rewrote all the tags in about 45 minutes, without injury.

Bless the group for their coolness and ability to keep the situation from becoming a meltdown. Jeanne did her best to keep me on task, which is kind of hard with my bouncing around multi-tasking skills. Jim and Lore calmly did whatever needed to be done. After hours of work, tribulation and extreme fun the flowers were opening in water and tagged.

The next morning Fred Berger (Oregon/Michigan) joined our now infamous group. Our exuberance and laughter may have been too high spirited for some, but we thought they secretly wished they could join our team. We selected and tagged the best of each variety. Lore selected buds from the few remaining flowers for a collection. We had exactly 25 varieties, which we needed to make the entry. A few of the full doubles weren't as open as we'd like, but not to worry, we'd heard of the blow dryer and watched as others lay them down on their tables under the tighter buds. We saw others blow-drying the buds, so what the heck, we'd best get someone on that right away. As Jim was styling those babies, Fred gave them the once over and set them in the correct classifications on the show tables. We worked at a fast pace to meet the entry deadline. We cleaned our worktables, had lunch, attended seminars and bought peony books while the judges did their work.

Viewing the peony exhibit was breathtaking. It was peony heaven to see so many varieties on display. I spotted our collection of 25 flowers. I was pleased to see, that even with a toasted Command Performance and a slightly brown edged Cheddar Surprise, it was awarded a Third Place ribbon. Then I laughed as I realized there were only three entries in that classification. We learned that a few classifications were not awarded a Blue Ribbon if the judges did not believe one was warranted. We also discovered that duplicate entries could be displayed in various classifications (a detail we overlooked). Each time we spotted a ribbon on one of our entries, we beamed with pride. Brooks Gardens received six Blue Ribbons and a total of 17 awards.

I am so thankful for the efforts of our team. We had tremendous fun, learned a lot and appreciated everyone's generosity in sharing their knowledge on exhibiting flowers. We are pumped and ready to go again next year. Bring some flowers and join the excitement!

— Therese Sprauer



Top: Richard and Anna Tamura and Carol Adelman enjoy visiting gardens.

Center: Fred Berger was a great help in setting up Therese Sprauer's entries.

Below: Visitors look at flower displays.



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PNWPS ANNUAL MEETING



Above: Carol and Jim Adelman with Carsten Burkhardt in front of a beautiful mural background at McMenamins Edgefield.

Below: Al and Rick Rogers and others give Carsten their undivided attention.



### CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

August 16, 2008  
Peony Picnic at  
Adelman's Nursery  
Brooks, Oregon

October 18, 2008  
Peony Sale at  
Al's Garden Center  
Sherwood, Oregon

Feb. 27 thru March 1, 2009  
Yard, Garden & Patio Sale  
Portland, Oregon

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