

Proceedings Second *Plant Propagators Society* Meeting

FRIDAY MORNING SESSION

December 12, 1952

Registration and various preparations occupied the first morning of this second annual meeting of the Plant Propagators Society. The meeting was scheduled to be called to order at 1:30 p. m. by President James S. Wells.

The Second Annual Meeting of the Plant Propagators Society convened in the Ballroom, Wade Park Manor, Cleveland, Ohio, at 1:40 o'clock, President James S. Wells, Koster Nursery, Bridgeton, New Jersey, presiding.

PRESIDENT WELLS: Gentlemen, we were waiting for the microphone to be fixed but the engineer isn't here, so we propose to start anyway, and to get things rolling I understand that Mr. Arnold Davis, who is the Director of the Cleveland Garden Center, is going to welcome us here. Mr. Arnold Davis! (Applause)

MR. ARNOLD DAVIS: I am here because it is customary for someone to say we are glad that you came. I hope Ed. has already said that to all of you and I need say no more.

This is the second conference of the Plant Propagators Society which is being held in Cleveland. Last year, the first conference was held at Hotel Statler. I am very glad to see so many of you here again this year.

My horticultural background is perhaps of a nondescript nature. I grew up in the east, in the section where we had a large number of private estates and on each of these private estates there was a superintendent. Occasionally, the superintendent would speak to you; most of the time he talked about you. He told you what to do and how to do it, and there is no question that class of men knew how to grow things, knew how to grow them well, and took a great deal of pride in the secrets which they had. Also, at that time there were very few people who were interested in ornamental plants. There were very few people who made any pretense of knowing the technical names of plants.

The group that knew their material by and large were Kew men, men from Glasgow and men from Edinburgh, occasionally a man from Germany and once in a long time a man from Denmark, but their horticulture was sound. They kept it to themselves and when they left this world they took it with them.

Now during this period of some 40 or 50 years, the lifetime of those of us who are here, we have seen the whole picture change. There have been many reasons for that. First of all, there started in this country a great movement for amateur horticulture. Second, the experiment stations

began to investigate the field of horticulture, usually at the request of nurserymen's associations. They had definite problems. They wanted help and they went to the experiment stations, and the information became public. More and more, you find publications coming out on the control of plant diseases, on the propagation of plants, on the field of let's say breeding of new varieties of plants. The result has been that at the present time there is a present interest in ornamental horticulture that reaches down, down not to the private estate man, not the man with a large home, but the little individual who may be far down in the scale. But he is important, and I want to reiterate that statement, that his interest may be in African violets in the kitchen window and begonias, he, however, spends money for plants and as his status changes he will continue to spend more money for plants.

At the present time, it is a great industry. Now I hold two theories concerning this industry. One is that you and I who are not horticulturists do not appreciate the dignity of those whom we employ. We underestimate ourselves with the knowledge we have accumulated and we are inclined to pass things by lightly and say anyone can grow it. I think we need to evaluate the information which we have acquired the hard way. I think we need also to exchange ideas and one of the valuable things that you get out of a conference of this sort is the fact that you give something and you get something. Somebody else gets some new ideas. He may become a competitor of yours. I sincerely hope he does, because when he begins to compete with you, you get on your mettle and say, "I am not going to let that bird beat me," and you begin to bring out better things. You grow your plants better, you begin to work out shortcuts. The net result, more people are able to enjoy the results you have. I am a firm believer in competition.

My second point is that gardening today has reached the stage where in this country it is a form of recreation. You and I probably don't think of it as recreation; it is our business. The man who takes care of the greens on the golf course doesn't think of golf as recreation and a professional golf man feels the same way about that particular field.

Now I would like to have you think about this. You have certain forms of recreation in which you indulge. Some of you may have boats or some of you may ride horses and some of you may play tennis, and some of you are maybe content to play penny ante. I don't care what you do for recreation. The point which I think is very important is that in your own recreational activities you expect to spend some money. Now if you and I as horticultural professional promoters—I happen to be a horticultural promoter if you want to know what I am—appreciate the fact that we are working with a field that is recreation let's say to most of the people we come in contact with, then those people should expect to pay for their recreation. Actually, they think more about it if they have to pay for it. It is going to do a great deal to lift the dignity of horticulture, and let's say to give you the type of income for the knowledge you have put into it again to develop or promote the business you are tied up with.

There are two things you can think about as far as the present day is concerned. I sincerely believe that as this country expands, and it is going to expand very rapidly in the next 15 years—that is not my statement; that is the statement of the bankers who make the loans, who see the babies coming along, all of whom want homes—there is going to be a terrific demand for lawns and plants and the things that go with gardens

and it is going to be people in your field of activity that are going to supply that type of plant.

Now we need better types of plant materials. I am old enough to remember the introduction, the every-day introduction of the Japanese barberry, and I am young enough to begin to see the over-production of Japanese yews. Don't feel badly because I made that statement. I think the yews will reach the point where barberry has got to today. We need new plants. The only way we are going to get them—I am not referring to exploration, I am referring to the fact that some of you boys can propagate superior strains and superior types so they hit the market, so people can buy them, so there is an interest for more people to want them, so the market gets bigger.

I am very glad to seriously welcome you here for what I hope will be the most profitable meeting that the Plant Propagators Society has had.

I would like at this time to pay a little tribute which passes off lightly but it is very heartfelt and very sincere, for the work Mr. Scanlon has done in putting together this meeting and I would like to ask you to give Mr. Scanlon a big hand for his courage in calling this meeting and I hope it works out as successfully as he intends it should. Thank you very much. (Applause)

PRESIDENT WELLS: Thank you very much, Mr. Davis. You stole my thunder about Ed. Scanlon. If there is one man here who deserves praise, it is he, because he is the man who has done all the work. That is always the case with the secretary and we are laying plans to see that he continues.

We have had a meeting this morning at which we have been trying to plan ahead and it was originally arranged for me to give you details of some of the things we decided this morning at this time. We decided later that it would be best if we stuck to the program. We didn't quite finish all the things we wanted to do, so we are going to have another meeting this evening at around 7:00 o'clock, finish things up and present them to you at the business meeting at 8:30.

Probably many of you are wanting to know how you can become a member. What are the formalities, and so on? We hope to be able to give you all the answers then. We hope that the business meeting will not be too long with that kind of thing because we might continue into a general discussion on plant propagation, call it a round table, if you will, because that is really what we have come here to talk about.

I would like to set a keynote, if I may, and that is that this is not a meeting that is a stiff and starchy affair, that is all cut and dried. We want to hear from everyone. We want anyone who thinks he has something to say to make an effort and get up and say it. We want discussion. The more discussion we can get the more we believe everyone will get out of it. If you have anything to say at any of the meetings will you try to speak clearly so that this lady can take down what you say. Preface your remarks with your name, and if you like, your nursery or your place of business to identify yourself, and please do speak clearly because we are planning on printing a complete proceedings of everything that goes on here, and that we believe will be one of the most valuable things to come out of this meeting.