

## National Plant Collections: Source of New and Unusual Plant

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All of us who collect plants for our personal gardens or for commercial purposes know that many good plants have become difficult if not impossible to find. Not because they have been superseded by better plants, but simply because they are no longer in fashion. Typically, long after these plants have disappeared from commercial catalogs, a new generation of gardeners becomes interested in them and begins to write and talk about them. The demand for these plants increases. Nurseries search for sources, and if we are lucky, the plant becomes a good commercial item. In many cases, however, the plant may have disappeared entirely and exists only as a memory. Many victorian plants, such as, *Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Flore Pleno' and *R. officinalis* 'Argentia', the double-flowered and silver rosemaries, and *Myrtus communis* 'Leucocarpa' and *M. communis* 'Flore Plena', the white-berried and the double myrtles, have gone this route. The true *Rosa xcentifolia* is only seen in old paintings.

In 1978, several members of the Royal Horticultural Society who were lamenting the loss of centuries of historic British plants decided to form a group that would prevent this tragic loss from continuing. They banded together and combed the English countryside in search of gardeners and nurseries who had a deep interest in a particular genus of plants. That group, The National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens, now has more than 600 collections listed in their directory and 40 local groups. Similar councils have been formed in France, Australia, New Zealand, and now North America.

Four years ago here in the United States of America, a group of 20 committed plantsmen consisting of authors, lecturers, academics, and gardeners, with diverse backgrounds in botany, horticulture, taxonomy, and agriculture, decided to form the North American Plant Preservation Council (NAPPC). The NAPPC has listed over 100 collections to date!!

Like its British counterpart, the NAPPC has five primary goals:

1) To encourage the conservation of uncommon plants which are valuable because of their historic, aesthetic, scientific, or educational value by propagating and distributing them as widely as possible.

2) To list plants held in important collections at different nurseries and gardens.

3) To encourage the widest possible cultivation of uncommon and endangered plants by arranging conferences, exhibitions, discussions, and visits to gardens, specialist plant collections, and nurseries.

4) To encourage the reintroduction and distribution of uncommon and endangered plants.

5) And most important, to establish and support collections of specified genera, selected species within genera, and other defined collections of plants for the enjoyment and information of the public and the benefit of science.

The NAPPC not only brings people to plants, but people to people who share

similar interests. There has already been much exchange between our council and the NCCPG. While the NAPPC concentrates its efforts in the nursery and private sector, a similar group has been formed to register collections at public institutions. Under the auspices of the American Association of Botanic Gardens and Arboreta, The North American Plant Collections Consortiums goals are similar to ours.

Now the fun part—I've brought some candy for your eyes. We'll take a whirlwind tour around the continent to visit some of the exciting collections that the NAPPC has registered to date.[Editor's Note: The author showed a series of slides depicting examples of the collections listed below.]

Collection holder	Collections held
Terra-Nova Nursery; Portland, Oregon	<i>Heuchera, Tiarella, Pulmonaria</i>
Perry, Leonard; University of Vermont	<i>Aster, Solidago</i>
Waddick, James; Kansas City, Missouri	<i>Iris</i>
Starhill Arboretum; Petersburg, Illinois	<i>Quercus</i>
Royal Botanic Gardens; Hamilton, Ontario, Canada	<i>Syringa</i>
Hosta Hill; Tucker, Georgia	<i>Hosta</i>
Geraniaceae; Kentfield, California	<i>Geranium, Erodium</i>
Fancy Fronds; Seattle, Washington	Pteridophytes
Pine Knot Farms; Clarksville, Virginia	<i>Campanula</i>
Appalachian Wildflowers; Reedsville, Pennsylvania	<i>Phlox</i>
Spangle Creek; Spangle, Washington	<i>Cypripedium</i>
Stonecrop Gardens; Cold Springs, New York	<i>Salvia, Primula, Saxifraga</i>
Squaw Mountain Gardens; Estacada, Oregon	<i>Sedum, Sempervivum, Jovibarba, Rosularia, Orostachys</i>
Scott Arboretum; Swarthmore, Pennsylvania	<i>Ilex, Magnolia</i>
Bluemel, Kurt; Baldwin, Maryland	<i>Miscanthus, Carex</i>
Foster, Steven; Eureka Springs, Arkansas	<i>Echinacea</i>
Daffodil Mart; Gloucester, Virginia	<i>Narcissus, Hyacintha, Tulipa</i>
Long Lane Farms; Spring Mills, Pennsylvania	<i>Astilbe</i>

Think about it—a botanic information super highway engineered to preserve plants for future generations to enjoy. Those of you here who are ready to register a collection or want to learn more about the mechanics of plant preservation, please come talk to me, we'd love to have you participate.