

## William Flemer III (1922–2007) Princeton Nurseries®

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### OVERVIEW:

- I.P.P.S. Member for 55 years
- Award of Merit Recipient Eastern Region, North America
- Fellow Recipient Eastern Region, North America
- Past President Eastern Region, North America

### NURSERYMAN AND PROPAGATOR

A member of I.P.P.S. since 1952 (a year after the Society was founded) Bill Flemer lived the I.P.P.S. motto "To Seek and Share." He was talked into joining I.P.P.S. by his good friend and founding member Jim Wells.

A very active member of I.P.P.S. for many years, Bill presented over 25 papers to the Society and was always ready to answer questions raised by members during meetings. His extensive knowledge of plants and his tireless efforts to improve plant cultivars for the industry led him to introduce over 60 trees and shrubs.

Bill was a walking encyclopedia of plants, propagation, and production techniques. As part of his plant development program he was heavily involved in the development of new and more effective propagation and production techniques. Bill lectured widely on nursery management, plant propagation, woody plant breeding, and shade tree selection and use.

A third generation nurseryman, Bill Flemer grew up in the Princeton, New Jersey, area.

The original family business, F&F Nurseries, Springfield, New Jersey, was founded by his grandfather in 1868. In 1913, land was purchased in Princeton, New Jersey, which led to the founding of Princeton Nurseries by Bill's father, William Flemer, Jr. At one time over 2000 acres were under cultivation at this location. Princeton Nurseries, like many others in the United States, struggled through the depression and World War II; it was not until the building boom of the 1950s that the nursery recovered.

Bill began his college career in 1942 attending Yale University, where he earned both a bachelor of arts degree and a masters degree in botany. His college studies were postponed during World War II, when he served in the 603<sup>rd</sup> Engineer Camouflage Battalion in Europe whose mission was to distract the main German army forces from the Allies' Normandy invasion site. After service, he returned home to complete his education and enter the family business — Princeton Nurseries. Bill grew up in the nursery industry and said he never considered any other line of work, except possibly teaching botany, which he did as a graduate student at Yale. They disbanded the botany department, so he came back home.

Bill was named Vice President of Princeton Nurseries in 1950. In 1972, he became President of the nursery a position he held for 20 years.

In addition to his leadership of Princeton Nurseries, Bill has been extremely involved in nursery associations. His appointments include Past Presidents of the

Ornamental Growers' Association, the New Jersey Association of Nurserymen, the Eastern Regional Nurserymen's Association, the National Association of Plant Patent Owners, the American Association of Nurserymen (now ANLA), and the Eastern Region of the International Plant Propagators Society.

He has served as Chairman of the U.S. National Arboretum Advisory Board, and was for 6 years a member of the Arnold Arboretum Visiting Committee. He also served on the White House Grounds Committee in Washington D.C. NMPRO magazine named Bill "Grower of the Year" in 1998.

In addition to induction into the American Association of Nurserymen's (now ANLA) Hall of Fame, Bill has been the recipient of honors such as the Thomas Roland Medal and the Jackson Dawson Medal from the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, the Garden Club of America's Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Achievement Medal from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, the Wayside Gardens Company Award, the Catherine H. Sweeney Award from the American Horticultural Society, the International Plant Propagators' Society Award of Merit, and the Gold Veitch Memorial Medal from the Royal Horticultural Society.

Bill willingly shared his knowledge and experience with the industry over the years by publishing numerous articles and four books, *Shade and Ornamental Trees in Color* (1965), *Nature's Guide to Successful Gardening and Landscaping* (1965, 1989), *Ornamental Shrubs in Hardy and Temperate Climates* (co-authored in 1982), and *Rewarding Careers in the Nursery Industry* (1990).

**Table 1.** Plants introduced by William Flemer III.

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<i>Acer palmatum</i> 'Crimson Prince'
<i>Acer platanoides</i> 'Prigo', Princeton Gold® Norway maple
<i>Acer platanoides</i> Summershade™ Norway maple
<i>Acer rubrum</i> 'October Glory'
<i>Acer saccharum</i> 'Bonfire'
<i>Acer saccharum</i> 'Goldspire'
<i>Acer saccharum</i> 'Green Mountain'
<i>Amelanchier</i> × <i>grandiflora</i> Cumulus® hybrid serviceberry
<i>Amelanchier laevis</i> 'Majestic'
<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i> 'White Pillar' PP 7203
<i>Campsis radicans</i> 'Crimson Trumpet' PP4119
<i>Celtis Magnifica</i> ™ hybrid hackberry
<i>Cladrastris kentukea</i> 'Sweet Shade'
<i>Clethra alnifolia</i> 'September Beauty' PP 10481
<i>Cornus kousa</i> 'Summer Stars'
<i>Crataegus laevigata</i> 'Superba' Crimson Cloud™ English hawthorn
<i>Crataegus phaenopyrum</i> PNI 1661, Princeton Sentry® Washington hawthorn
<i>Euonymus alatus</i> 'October Glory'
<i>Forsythia</i> × <i>intermedia</i> 'Princeton Gold' PP 11055
<i>Fraxinus americana</i> PNI 2331 Greenspire® white ash
<i>Ginkgo biloba</i> 'Magyar'
<i>Ginkgo biloba</i> 'Princeton Sentry'
<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> 'Rubylace'
<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> 'Shademaster' PP 1515
<i>Hamamelis mollis</i> 'February Gold'
<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i> 'November Glow'

*Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Flemygea', Snow Queen® oakleaf hydrangea  
*Ilex opaca* f. *xanthocarpa* 'Princeton Gold'  
*Juniperus virginiana* PNI 3570, Princeton Sentry® eastern red cedar  
*Maackia amurensis* 'Starburst' PP 10557  
*Malus* 'American Beauty'  
*Malus baccata* 'Walters'  
*Malus* 'Bridal Bouquet' PP 5800  
*Malus* 'Cardinal' PP 7147  
*Malus* 'Pink Perfection'  
*Malus* 'Snowcloud'  
*Malus* 'Strawberry Parfait' PP 4632  
*Phellodendron amurense* PNI 4551 Shademaster® Amur cork tree  
*Prunus sargentii* 'Princeton Snowcloud' PP 10989  
*Prunus* × *subhirtella* 'Rosy Cloud'  
*Prunus* × *yedoensis* 'Afterglow' PP 5730  
*Pyrus calleryana* 'Redspire'  
*Quercus palustris* 'Crownright'  
*Quercus palustris* 'Pingreen', Green Pillar® pin oak  
*Robinia* × *slavinii* Purple Crown™ hybrid locust  
*Styphnolobium japonicum* (syn. *Sophora japonica*) Regent® scholar tree  
*Styphnolobium japonicum* (syn. *Sophora japonica*) Princeton Upright™ scholar tree  
*Sorbus alnifolia* 'Red Bird'  
*Syringa reticulata* 'Regent'  
*Tilia cordata* 'Greenspire'  
*Tilia tomentosa* 'Green Mountain'  
*Ulmus americana* 'Ded-free'  
*Ulmus americana* 'Nassau'  
*Ulmus americana* 'Princeton'  
*Viburnum dentatum* 'October Glory'  
*Viburnum plicatum* 'Pink Snowball'  
*Vinca minor* 'Shademaster'  
*Zelkova serrata* Green Vase® zelkova  
*Zelkova serrata* Village Green® zelkova