

in the garden *by Stephen and Kristin Pategas*



STEPHEN & KRISTIN PATEGAS

A Passion For Plants

We'll take that one, one of those and wow, three of those! Gardening at our home and designing with interesting plants has become an obsession for us. Why plant the boring

when the new and interesting is just a nursery or web site click away? However, it wasn't always this easy for gardeners.



The Trial Garden at Mount Vernon includes ornamental and potential food crop plants.

In the 18th century in Britain and Europe, owning unusual plants became a status symbol. In Britain even plants from warmer climes were in demand due to the elimination of the glass tax in 1845. Once glass was affordable, greenhouses sprung up and housed collections of cold-tender plants collected from afar. Plant explorers from European countries traveled far and wide in search of new plants to fuel this fad. Our native plants and those from Asia were especially popular in Britain since the whole United Kingdom had only about 1,400 native species of



*Bartram sent seeds from our native southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) to Britain.*

plants. Compare that to about 4,200 for Florida which is only two-thirds the size. No wonder Juan Ponce de León named us "La Florida" (Land of Flowers)!

Thousands of plants were discovered worldwide and then many made their way from Europe to America. Often they were traded for



Head over to Mead Botanical Garden to see the Bartram marker.

our native plants. John Bartram (1699-1777) who sent seeds of approximately 100 New World native plants to England, and his son William (1739-1823) were plant explorers and naturalists from Philadelphia who roamed the southeast. At Mead Botanical Garden in Winter Park look for the William Bartram Trail historical marker that records where he jour-

neyed on one of his visits. Find another marker at the Turtle Mound at the Canaveral National Seashore south of New Smyrna Beach.

Even George Washington was fascinated by plants and their potential uses for an emerging nation. At Mount Vernon we found his plant trial garden with imports from other countries. Bartram's garden on the shores of the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia is also open to visitors. Locally, view an astounding selection of labeled plants at Harry P. Leu Gardens and Bok Tower Gardens.

At Hortus Oasis we trial new plants and in what we call a Florilegium (from the Latin flos/flower and legere/to gather: literally a gathering of flowers) we record the plants presently or formerly in our garden and how they perform. So far we've grown over 540 different native and non-native plants. Luckily we've had some successes and many we have specified in our designs for gardens throughout Central Florida.

PLANT BITS

Read: "Travels of William Bartram" by William Bartram and "The Brother Gardeners" by Wulf

Explore: Follow the Bartram Trail by foot, canoe, bicycle, horseback, car or armchair using "An Outdoor Guide To Bartram's Travels" by Spornick, Cattier and Greene

Buy Local: Lukas Nursery in Oviedo www.lukasnursery.com has the widest selection for retail sale.

Buy Online: Plant Delight's Nursery - www.plantdelights.com; Yucca Do Nursery - www.yuccado.com ■

Kristin and Stephen Pategas design landscapes and gardens at their home and business Hortus Oasis in Winter Park. Contact them at garden@hortusoasis.com or visit www.hortusoasis.com and www.pategaionplants.com.

All photography by Stephen G. Pategas/Hortus Oasis