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*Beatrix Farrand's Plant Book  
for Dumbarton Oaks*

*edited by Diane Kostial McGuire*

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Beatrix Jones Farrand in the library at 21 East Eleventh Street, New York (photo: Koshiba)

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Diane Kostial McGuire



Dumbarton Oaks  
Trustees for Harvard University  
Washington, District of Columbia  
1980

*Front cover:* ornamental sculpture and weeping cherry on the North Vista

*Back cover:* carved stone garden ornament

*Credits: Color photography*

Dumbarton Oaks (by Joseph Mills): front and back covers, figures 1, 5, 8

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Lois Fern, Editorial Associate

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## FOREWORD

*Diane Kostial McGuire*

Beatrix Farrand's *Plant Book* was written in 1941, in a period of critical importance to the preservation of western culture, so many elements of which are represented at Dumbarton Oaks. During those dark and difficult days, the humanist ideals exemplified in the creation of the Byzantine Library by Robert Woods Bliss and embodied in the imagination of Mildred Bliss, expressed in her creation of the gardens, were threatened with extinction. To some who had been born before the turn of the century, who had experienced the Great War, the dynamic optimism of the twenties, and the economic upheavals and consequent political struggles of the thirties, there was a realization of the magnitude of the threat. The bright lights of European culture and art were soon to be dimmed, and the basis of our civilization was challenged.

Almost forty years later these ideals are still threatened, but we now have come to value our own cultural assets and through the preservation movement are taking an active part in assuring their continuance in the future. The decision to publish the *Plant Book* is a recognition of the premise that the gardens at Dumbarton Oaks form a significant part of our cultural heritage. The gardens are important because they represent a uniquely American adaptation of the classical Mediterranean garden form which traveling Americans came to admire in the late nineteenth century and which **was** so eloquently described by Edith Wharton in *Italian Villas and Their Gardens*. The design of the plantings follows the tradition of Gertrude Jekyll, with a palette adapted to the rigors of our continental climate and with a selection of tree species predominantly North American.

Beatrix Farrand's *Plant Book* is the cornerstone on which the plan for the preservation of the gardens at Dumbarton Oaks is based. Presentation of garden art must be founded on accurate historical documentation, but specific, detailed planting information often is lacking completely or survives in the most fragmentary form. John S. Thacher, appointed in 1940 the first Director of Dumbarton Oaks, was given the responsibility of overseeing its garden as well as administering its scholarly affairs. It was most important at that time to provide a smooth transition as the estate was turned over to Harvard University by its owners. Realizing that inevitably changes in the gardens would need to be made, that certain functions would be altered or eliminated, and that maintenance standards would be lowered in the future, he requested that Beatrix Farrand, who had been commissioned by Mildred Bliss in 1922 to design the gardens, write a plant book that would become a guide for their future upkeep and development. This was a request which demonstrated remarkable vision on the part of John Thacher, and it resulted in this unique document that describes measures to be taken when plants need replacement, the various levels of maintenance required, the design concept of each part of the gardens, why particular choices were made, and why certain ideas were rejected. In addition, forty-two plant lists are included which give the scientific names of the plants growing in the gardens in 1941. It is clear that the meticulous documen-

tation in her *Plant Book* was an arduous and time-consuming task for Beatrix Farrand who, at almost seventy, had been working on the gardens for twenty years. The very nature of the gardens, their organizational complexity, and her own conscientious nature which caused her to suffer anxiety over delay or inaccuracy, made the compilation of the book a labor of love requiring immense perseverance. But thanks to her dedication, and the foresight of John Thacher in engaging her for this task, we have a document of great value, not only to Dumbarton Oaks but to the historical record of the development of landscape architecture in twentieth-century America.

It is indicative of Beatrix Farrand's interest in plants as a fundamental part of landscape design that in the course of her long, professional career she always described herself as "Landscape Gardener." She did not adopt the appellation "Landscape Architect" although she was, in 1899, one of the eleven founding members of the American Society of Landscape Architects. An Anglophile, she was in close sympathy with the English gardening movement and was particularly influenced by the planting design of Gertrude Jekyll, as well as by the high standards of garden maintenance in that country. When it was necessary, in 1955, to disband the Reef Point Association, which managed her own gardens in Bar Harbor, Maine, because, among other things, there was little prospect in the future of assuring the high quality of maintenance which she insisted on and felt was an integral part of garden design, she ruefully remarked in her address to the trustees that "it became increasingly clear to those in charge of running the enterprise that the inhabitants of the region do not have horticultural sap running in their veins as is emphatically the case in Britain."

She possessed to a rare degree the qualities which are of the highest value to the landscape gardener: a strong sense of design and a consuming interest in and knowledge of plants. At Reef Point she was able to carry on her horticultural interests through her living collection of rare plants in the gardens as well as in the formation of her herbarium. Her garden library, of great horticultural distinction, was a reference collection of numerous titles which included rare volumes, such as Giovanni Battista Falda's *Le Fontane di Roma* or Gerard's *Herball, or General Historie of Plants*, as well as antiquarian books of great practical value, such as Roger Clagg's *Woody Plants for Landscape Planting in Maine* or George Barrell Emerson's *Trees and Shrubs Growing Naturally in the Forests of Massachusetts*. Her formal education in the field of landscape gardening began in the study of plants with Charles Sprague Sargent at the Arnold Arboretum, and she continued her studies throughout her life so that she had an extraordinarily broad knowledge of the plants with which she worked. What distinguished her as a practitioner of the art of landscape gardening was her ability to use plants as strong design elements in themselves, providing form, texture, color, and depth. Her approach is masterful. The identifying characteristics of her work are evident in simple plantings, such as the path to the fields from the director's house at the Huntington Library, and in the complexities of texture and color which form the substance of the design for the east lawn at Dumbarton Oaks.

Beatrix Farrand's planting design is characterized primarily by appar-

ent simplicity, but on close observation one realizes its extraordinarily subtle and complicated nature. It is worthwhile to analyze her planting in order to gain an understanding of how the parts are put together and synchronized to form the whole. This quality of harmony explains the atmosphere of "restfulness" which one experiences in all her gardens. Restfulness and simplicity are by themselves not enough to distinguish a garden, but when executed with imagination and intelligence, true distinction is evident.

In her planting designs the formalism which characterized most of her work comes through clearly and is the point of departure for each planting scheme. Plants were of primary importance as markers—generally there were two symmetrically placed, but sometimes two or three to one side, which indicated an entry or an important point of transition within a garden. In certain instances her planting design is symmetrical. Where it is, there are sufficient irregularities in the placement of the plants to ensure that there is no sense of monotony. More commonly, her plantings have a well-balanced asymmetry. At Dumbarton Oaks, as one enters each part of the garden, particularly each enclosure, the arrangement is such that one comprehends the whole and then examines the detail. The balanced planting within a space contributes greatly to this sense of completeness, and yet, because of the markers and the arrangement of specimen plants, there is also a sense of progression from one space to another. It is the use of plants in such controlled and subtle ways that distinguishes the work.

A study of the plant lists reveals Beatrix Farrand's strong reliance on the broadleaf evergreens to form the structure of the design and to provide strong textural interest as well. The hollies and boxes do both, and they possess enormous versatility. The extraordinary Box Walk at Dumbarton Oaks is an example of Beatrix Farrand's taking the most common element found in almost every garden in the southern United States and transforming it into an original art form. The ascent of the brick steps through the boxwood is an experience in rhythm and progression comparable to a musical composition. The texture of boxwood, which forms such fine and delicate hedges in her gardens in Washington and at Bar Harbor, was replaced in the California work by *Myrtus communis*, which like the others had the advantage of a Mediterranean tradition.

The history of plant use was of great importance to Mildred Bliss, who wanted not only to live in a "country" estate but to have at the same time the feeling that her garden was old and furnished amply with historic associations. Compared to the intentions of the sixteenth-century Italians who placed antique statuary and broken remains from the classical world in their gardens to remind them of vanished glories, the aim at Dumbarton Oaks was not so intellectual, but more emotional and direct. The three plants most commonly used in the garden, the yew, the holly, and the box, are the embodiment of our deepest associations with the gardens of the Old World and with the cottage gardens of England.

Because of the irregularities of the terrain at Dumbarton Oaks and because there were to be both formal and informal spaces, Beatrix Farrand saw the opportunity to arrange the planting of trees in unusually interesting configura-

tions. When work began on the gardens in 1922, there were on the property many fine existing trees, primarily oaks, some of which she integrated into her garden scheme (some have since died and not been replaced). Silver maples, oaks, Japanese maples, the katsura, and beech were admired by Beatrix Farrand, and she worked many of these trees into her design with success. Of course, during the construction of the gardens others had to be removed because of the extensive amount of grading or because parts of the property had not been brought under cultivation before.

In many instances trees were used in the European manner and it is this characteristic, more than any other, which gives the gardens their distinctively Old World atmosphere. The Kieffer pears at the end of the Herb Garden were planted in the style of the Tuscan gardens of the early Renaissance as a double aerial hedge with "look-outs" that allow the view to be framed in a series of panels. The *Magnolia grandiflora* espaliered against the house is an example of the use of an American tree in the European way. In the manner of Italian orchards, apples, cherries, and crabapples have been planted on the hillsides, more for their effect than for their fruit, although Beatrix Farrand did recommend to John Thacher that the apple orchard become more productive through the planting of good, heavy-bearing varieties.

Adjacent to the Music Room, extending to what was formerly the *boulingrin*, or bowling green, is the Copse. It retains today only a trace of its original form because of the construction in 1963 of the Pre-Columbian Museum, but its former importance is clearly indicated in the 1935 topographical view of Dumbarton Oaks that is mounted over the Music Room fireplace. This little wood provided a contrast to the open terraces and to the more controlled arrangements of trees in other parts of the property. Though the Copse was the largest naturalistic planting, groups of smaller trees were planted elsewhere in order to convey the atmosphere of woodland in a very small space. The group of *Cornus florida* outside the Fountain Terrace is placed in such a way as to suggest an extensive wood outside the wall and to form a transition between the small, enclosed gardens and the broad, south and east lawns.

Although sculpture is used in the gardens, it is on a modest scale. The specimen trees themselves assume the proportion of monumental sculpture. The large beech on the Beech Terrace, the magnolias adjacent to the Box Terrace, the silver maple reflected in Lovers' Lane Pool are examples of trees skillfully placed to achieve a sculptural effect. They are not incidental to the composition but dominate and form the central focus. Most of the varieties of trees used in this manner have good winter form or bark that gives them year-round interest.

The screen plantings at Dumbarton Oaks are especially distinguished along R Street, where the pattern has altered very little over the years except that a large portion of the understory, which is needed in order to give an illusion of greater depth, has died and has not been replaced because of the lack of light now that the overstory has matured.

There are many progressions in the plantings in the Dumbarton Oaks gardens. It is important to identify and understand these because, when replace-

ments are to be made or changes planned, it is critical that the patterns be uninterrupted. The sequence from Green Garden to Beech Terrace to Box Terrace to Rose Garden is of great importance in the original design. It has been interrupted at a critical point, although for the most part it remains intact and is worthy of examination. One makes one's way from the Green Garden through the Beech Terrace and then toward the axis at the east end of the orangery. The progression is not defined by the classical symbolism represented in many eighteenth-century landscape gardens, such as Stourhead or Castle Howard, but by the elements and characteristics of site, sunlight, color, and texture frequently used for definition in the Italian gardens of the sixteenth century where the plantings themselves define the sequence.

At Dumbarton Oaks this particular sequence begins with the monochromatic use of greens near the house. The brilliant yellow, fall foliage of the wistaria, and the fiery red of the Japanese maple offer a brief seasonal accent. The effect in the Green Garden is especially serene, an effect reinforced by the white flowers of the azalea hedge in the adjacent Star Garden. The wistaria blossoms and the early, white flowers of the *Pieris japonica* are delicate and refreshing, and contribute to the coolness that prevails in the north-facing Green Garden where the reflective, glossy leaves of the black oaks produce a shimmering light in this *bosco*.

From these airy heights one progresses to the dense shade and "presence" of the great beech on the Beech Terrace which, because of its broad, low-spreading canopy and closeness to the orangery, gives one the impression of passing through a wood. The stairs to the Box Terrace provide a transition from dense shade to sunlight. Only the smaller section of this terrace, to the south of the walk, represents Beatrix Farrand's own design. On the broader, north side where the stone urn is placed, the sequence has been interrupted by a later design much more fanciful than was originally intended. The south side is relatively somber and severe in its geometry of clipped boxwood and closely cut lawn. The Box Terrace, in its small scale and simple planting, was designed as a kind of "anteroom" before the descent to the color and intricate pattern of the Rose Garden below. The importance of the Box Terrace in the sequence has been considerably diminished by the subsequent elaboration of its ground plane.

The progression from the *bosco* of the Green Garden, north of the orangery, to the Rose Garden is similar in sequence to the descent from the *bosco* to the parterre and water-basins at the sixteenth-century Villa Lante, near Bagnaia, although at Dumbarton Oaks the planting is the central element in the design whereas at Villa Lante the water sequence dominates. An understanding of how the plantings carry out the design at Dumbarton Oaks is essential because the plantings are the most important design element. Because the plants are constantly changing, the design is easily misinterpreted.

The sequence ends in the Rose Garden with a burst of color. The roses provide a consistent warmth and brightness throughout the fine months of the year, as do the plantings in the Fountain Terrace and the Herbaceous Border. Over the years, the clear differentiation of color values between the latter two

has been obscured. Originally each of these gardens was designed to display the subtleties and variations of a specific, limited range of color. The Fountain Terrace contained shades of yellow, orange, bronze, and maroon, and the Herbaceous Border, pink, red, lavender, and pale blue. In other parts of the gardens the emphasis was on subtle differences of texture, reflectiveness, and seasonal variation, and these are where the delicacy and sensitivity of Mildred Bliss and Beatrix Farrand are most apparent.

Color is used in some parts of the garden as a wash, in a bold, painterly manner. The best known example is the Forsythia Dell. Perhaps more interestingly, this technique is used on the hillside orchards of cherry, apple, and crabapple, where on the ground the effects of a broad wash are repeated in spring with scilla, daffodils, and a variety of ground covers.

One of the reasons Beatrix Farrand agreed to write the *Plant Book* was that she felt strongly that proper maintenance was critical to the success of her landscape design. She well understood, because of her work at Yale and Princeton Universities, that the standard of maintenance would be very different when responsibility for the gardens was turned over from Mildred Bliss to Harvard University. It is important that we understand the meaning that this had for her as a gardener. Because she was, first and foremost, a "Landscape Gardener" whose primary interest was in the use of plants for their own, intrinsic, design value, rather than in the achievement of a design through a specific, spatial arrangement, she was deeply concerned with the control of plants through continual maintenance. In many of the gardens which she designed in Bar Harbor, she worked directly with the gardeners of the estates over a period of time in order that they should thoroughly understand the design concept and the maintenance procedures necessary to control the plantings in the form and size required by the design.

Foremost in the matter of maintenance was proper pruning. Her direction for maintenance of box in the garden is very much in the Japanese manner—continual clipping in order that the proper relationships of scale be kept. Much of the content of the *Plant Book* is directed to this issue of scale, control, and eventual replacement. Although the standard of garden maintenance in this country was higher in the early years of the twentieth century than it had been, or is likely to be again, the exacting standard which Beatrix Farrand required in the maintenance of her gardens was exceptional even for that time.

Beatrix Farrand's manuscript was not illustrated, as it was intended only for use on the site and she doubtless assumed that her few readers would have ready access to Dumbarton Oaks's rich picture files. In this publication, early photographs depicting stages of planting representative of Beatrix Farrand's concepts have been provided wherever possible. Recent views round out the coverage. Some have been included for comparison with older views, to illustrate changes. Others that stand alone may be compared with the text or with the topographical view mentioned earlier, which is also reproduced and which illustrates the gardens in idealized form.

The topographical view was painted by Ernest Clegg in 1935 in the tradi-

tion of the Medici lunettes which were painted at the end of the sixteenth century for the *sala grande* of the Villa Ferdinanda at Artimino. These lunettes showed the extent of the patron's property and suggested the family's influential position in society, its wealth and prestige. Undoubtedly the purpose of this twentieth-century adaptation was the same. It is painted on paper and mounted on a wooden panel above the fireplace in the Music Room. It closely resembles the description of the gardens in the *Plant Book*, and, in addition, it indicates in detail those portions of the gardens, a total of approximately twenty-seven acres, which were not a part of the gift to Harvard in 1941 and are therefore not discussed in the *Plant Book*. The lower portion of the gardens along the stream, which is the entire foreground of the painting, was not given to Harvard University but became part of the National Park system. This section was very likely still cultivated in 1941 and it is unfortunate that we do not have a description of it similar to the descriptions of the gardens in the *Plant Book*. The woodland has now closed in on this section, and vandalism and neglect have taken their toll. However, it is possible to reconstruct the original concept of these naturalistic, spring gardens through field study, general notes about the plantings, and a study of the topographical view. The fate of this part of Beatrix Farrand's work is an illustration of the difficulty of maintaining a "naturalistic garden" in our eastern American wilderness where the slightest neglect will result in the reversion to woodland.

In addition to the photographs and the topographical view, a current map of the gardens, intended as a guide to visitors and as a reference for the text, has been provided. In instances where the names of parts of the garden have changed from the original given in the *Plant Book*, the legend indicates both the names.

The photographs indicate the composition of the plants in their relation to one another. There are also plates which illustrate in detail the characteristics of the plants which Beatrix Farrand used most frequently in the gardens. These engravings are taken from rare books in the Garden Library at Dumbarton Oaks, originally the private collection of Mildred Bliss. Beatrix Farrand, who possessed an excellent library of her own, at Reef Point, on all aspects of horticulture and architectural design related to the practice of garden art, advised Mildred Bliss over a number of years on purchases for the library at Dumbarton Oaks.

Although Beatrix Farrand does not often refer in her *Plant Book* to the Dumbarton Oaks garden sculpture, most of which she designed and had executed by Frederick Coles, it is of enough significance to the art of the garden to include reference to it here. Some of the garden sculpture, such as the antique, limestone, Provençal fountain which was originally in the Copse and which has now been moved to the Ellipse and the eighteenth-century terracotta urn formerly on the Box Terrace, was imported from France by Mildred Bliss. However, the most important sculptures in the gardens are the finials on the gate piers marking the transition from one garden to another. Most of these finials have a floral motif and are carved in stone, although some are a combi-

nation of stone and lead or stone and wrought iron. They appear in many of the garden photographs where their importance as markers or accents at points of transition within the design sequence can easily be seen. Pencil-and-ink drawings of a few of these finials appear as ornaments to the text.

A few technical notes on the editing are in order here. Unlike the botanist who invariably identifies a plant by its correct botanical name, or the nurseryman who uses the common or descriptive name, the landscape architect uses a mixed nomenclature which serves two purposes: to properly identify a specific variety of plant in order that there can be no doubt about the reference and, at the same time, to be certain that the reference is clearly understood by the layman who may not have a horticultural background. The text of the *Plant Book* reveals at once that Beatrix Farrand used such mixed nomenclature in her reference to plants. For example, in her discussion of the North Vista she refers to the “*repandens* Yews planted outside the basement windows.” In cases where mixed nomenclature occurs it has not been altered. Indeed, we have tried to retain the character of Beatrix Farrand’s writing to the greatest extent possible. The original text has been changed only where a sentence simply did not make sense due to a missing word or similar, obvious oversight.

The scientific and common names found in the text are those used by Beatrix Farrand. Where there has been a change of nomenclature since 1941, the new scientific name will be found in the accompanying plant list or in a footnote. Capitalization and other matters of style in respect to Latin and common plant names in the text conform to the practice found in the original manuscript. The guiding concept has been to print the body of the text as if the book had appeared in 1941. Only the plant lists and editor’s notes reflect current practice respecting botanical nomenclature.

The primary reference guide used in preparing the text was the six-volume 1922 edition of L. H. Bailey’s *The Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture*, a work still unsurpassed in detailed botanical references. In addition, the *Bay State Garden Book for 1938*, the catalog published by the famous Bay State Nurseries in North Abington, Massachusetts, was used as the standard reference for nursery terms and for many common names. In the plant lists, an effort has been made to designate every plant clearly for present-day readers by providing where necessary both old and new scientific names, and common names as well, in order that there may be no mistake about the identity of each plant. The reference for modern nomenclature is *Hortus Third* (New York, 1976). It should be noted by the reader referring from text to plant list that the plant lists include only plants growing in the gardens in 1941. In the lists, the plants are grouped in the order generally found in nursery catalogs: trees, evergreen (needle and broadleaf) and then deciduous: shrubs, evergreen (needle and broadleaf) and deciduous; vines; herbaceous plants; ground covers and bulbs.

The brief entries at the heads of most sections, set in italic, are by the editor, and are primarily to inform the reader of changes in the gardens which have taken place since the original text was written. The eulogy, “An Attempted Evocation of a Personality,” was written by Mildred Bliss and privately pub-

lished in 1960 as part of a memorial volume. As this little book is now out of print, it seemed appropriate to reprint her sensitive and thoughtful essay here, for it gives the reader a clearer understanding of Beatrix Farrand as a personality and reveals the generosity and perceptiveness of Mildred Bliss as well.

The primary impetus and incentive to publish the *Plant Book* has come from Giles Constable, Director of Dumbarton Oaks, who recognized its usefulness in the preparation of a master plan for the preservation, maintenance, and management of the gardens. Elisabeth B. MacDougall, Director of Studies in the History of Landscape Architecture, recognized its value as an historical document and the importance of making it available to a larger number of scholars. We agreed that the book would provide an important text in the teaching of planting design at both graduate and undergraduate levels. Students of landscape architecture often lack a sound grasp of the theory and practice of planting design, largely because the subject is not adequately covered in most schools. Publication of the work of professionals, such as Beatrix Farrand, who are articulate in theory and brilliant in practice will be of immense value to these students.

The major assistance in the editing of the text was provided by Lois Fern, Editorial Associate. Her acute judgment and good sense prevailed in instances of baffling nomenclature. Laura T. E. Byers, Librarian, and her assistant, Marcia L. Hudson, made the Rare Book Room available for the preparation of the manuscript and were helpful in providing illustrations from the Garden Library. Evhy Constable's drawings of sculptural details in the gardens ornament this volume, and she also undertook the search for old photographs. The photographs of the gardens in 1979 and the general photographic work for the *Plant Book* were provided by Ursula Pariser, Photographer for Dumbarton Oaks. Older photographs are from the picture files of Dumbarton Oaks. The map was prepared in 1975 by Doug Graf, Architect. My secretary, Anna Siney, did the typing and attended to many details which helped so much in meeting our publication schedule. Donald E. Smith, Superintendent of Gardens and Grounds, who began his gardening work for Beatrix Farrand at Reef Point, was able to unravel many discrepancies which existed between the descriptions in the text and the gardens as they appear today or even in earlier photographs.

Further afield, Mai K. Arbegast, California Landscape Architect and Horticulturist, responsible for the gardens at Filoli, in Woodside, provided advice on organization, and John C. MacGregor, Horticulturist at the Huntington Library in San Marino sorted out the rose nomenclature. Gary L. Koller, Supervisor of the Living Collections of the Arnold Arboretum, was able to help in the difficult identification of the *Prunus* family.

I am especially grateful for the assistance of Barbara H. Watson, Landscape Architect, for her detailed notes on the manuscript. In addition, I am particularly indebted to Edward N. Harrington, former Horticulturist at Harvard University, with whom I was fortunate enough to work for a number of years. His working knowledge of maintenance and nursery practice in the 1930s and 1940s has been of great value in interpretation of the text.

## AN ATTEMPTED EVOCATION OF A PERSONALITY\*

*Mildred Bliss*

In the death of Beatrix Farrand the American Society of Landscape Architects has lost the last surviving member of that farsighted and talented group which founded the society and created landscape architectural standards in this country; and the world has lost a most unusual and a rarely gifted woman.

In her girlhood the shrewd intellect of her able lawyer-uncle, John Cadwalader, had already recognized the exceptional abilities of his strong-willed niece. "Let her be a gardener, or, for that matter, anything she wants to be. What she *wishes* to do will be well done." So he punctuated her British garden trips by giving her shooting parties in Scotland where the gillies pronounced her "As guid as the best shot of a man"; and from her European travels, whence descriptive letters testified to her taste, he pondered her keen powers of observation and her concentrated reading. Finally, having won over the prejudices of late Victorian standards of what became a "lady," Beatrix Jones settled down to work at the Arnold Arboretum under Charles Sprague Sargent.

Never was a great teacher granted a pupil more ideally suited to his hopes. His knowledge was absorbed by her eager young intelligence, and the elderly Professor Sargent saw his dream of the continuity of horticultural research in this country assured. And then one day the pupil submitted the plan of a garden—paths, benches, group plantings in height and color—and the professor frowned. "Don't waste time on what you call design. You must hybridize and propagate. The only paths necessary are merely for accessibility and there is no time to sit on benches; a tree stump will do as well."

Later the pupil made one more effort to stir the comprehension of *gardens* as an aim in itself, but the master of horticulture could not understand. Sadly he saw his dream vanish and his beloved pupil leave Jamaica Plain and enter, one might say, her very personal garden gate.

The following years brought Beatrix Jones experience in the making of small and of large gardens; in forestation and in giving design and varied unity to university campuses—Princeton, Yale, and Chicago; and simultaneously her reputation grew. With her marriage to Dr. Max Farrand, the recognized authority on Benjamin Franklin, and their removal to San Marino, Mrs. Farrand adapted her ideas born of the California climate, topography, and plant material to new treatments and painted her living pictures with hitherto untried palettes. Here too, she again proved her especial genius for architectural adaptation by converting a nondescript, four-room cube into an elongated and particularly charming home with dignity and every comfort, well suited to the distinguished director of the Huntington Library and his guests. Her profound love of trees and plants gave her an understanding—one is almost tempted to

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\*Reprinted from *Beatrix Jones Farrand, 1872-1959: An Appreciation of a Great Landscape Gardener* (Washington, D.C., Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss, 1960), 9-17

say psychological understanding—of their idiosyncracies. But however definite their preferences and her ready obedience to their needs, she managed somehow so to place her axes that the vista she wanted took its place as if by happy accident.

Unfailingly courteous, she used competently her expressive and beautiful hands to explain the work to the mason and the bricklayer; or to demonstrate how and when to prune; or even, when teaching a novice, to lay a few yards of drain herself. She was, in fact, a thoroughly efficient dirt gardener: her knowledge of plant material had never been limited to landscape gardening, nor the designing of a livable house to that of the gazebo. Beatrix Farrand knew all of the problems and ignored none of the difficulties of the exacting but Gentle Art of Gardening.

Always preoccupied with scale and quality in every manifestation of the humanities, her imagination, constantly stimulated by association of ideas, was forever creating enriching surprises for the amateur. The tending of an individual plant, the protecting of a stone or marble unit, the care of a wooded hillside equally touched unsuspected responsiveness in the simplest of her fellow workers. They were proud to be associated with her and enjoyed watching the new horizons she unfolded to them.

While absorbed in making a new garden she kept the individuality of all other gardens untouched by the personality of the new denizen of her prolific imaginary world. She wrote little so as to *create* the more. Profoundly sensitive to music and with a fine voice, her greatest sacrifice had been abandoning the promising career of a singer when she put herself to work under Professor Sargent. However, she never looked back over her musical shoulder, but transferring her sense of rhythm to the world of nature composed her visual symphonies.

Redeeming the long-neglected but fine estate of Dartington Hall near Totnes in Devon gave Mrs. Farrand especial pleasure. The lay of the land, the climate, the farsighted planned-purposes, and the friendly owners appealed to her, and the results she obtained were noteworthy until World War II arrested her work.

But her two greatest loves were her own inherited property of Reef Point at Bar Harbor on Mount Desert Island and Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C. On seven acres bounded by Atlantic rocks and a sweep of sea, she so placed her sheltering conifers and secluded paths that a most astonishing variety of shrubs, flowers, and ground cover became a fascinating enclave of erudition on the scrubby coast of Maine. There she was able to grow plants found as far north as Newfoundland and as far south as North Carolina. This horticulturist's paradise could have been the enlightening lantern to guide the researchers of the future along the road of experimentation—an example of obtaining the greatest use from a small area and of reaping a large harvest from modest means. But among other insurmountable obstacles the difficulty of assuring competent maintenance over years to come loomed too large and Reef Point is no more. Its library, herbarium, and the invaluable collection of Gertrude

Jekyll's notes and papers are now properly housed, used, and prized by the University of California in Berkeley.

The gardens at Dumbarton Oaks were perhaps one of the most difficult problems presented to her, for she found not only an existing and a rather dominating house and an unusually wide variety of grades, but also the very definite personal preferences of the owners with their special interest in design and texture. The gardens were to be for spring and autumn enjoyment and in winter were to have perennial green in abundance. A swimming pool, tennis court, and brook completed the illusion of country life, while clever planting bordering the lawn screened the street on the south side and left the birds undisturbed. The onrush of spring at Dumbarton Oaks fairly leaves one breathless before the great billowing mass of forsythia tumbling down two hillsides turned to gold. This and the aerial white hedge of pollarded pear trees are imaginative plantings seen nowhere else.

Such were Mrs. Farrand's integrity and loyalty that, despite the long absences necessitated by the professional nomadism of the owners, never in all the years did she impose a detail of which she was "sure" but which the owners did not "see"; and never were the owners so persuasive as to insist on a design which Mrs. Farrand's inner eye could not accept. A deepening friendship born of intellectual challenges, of differing tastes, and of the generous tact of her rich wisdom made the years of their close association a singularly happy and most nourishing experience. Never did Beatrix Farrand impose on the land an arbitrary concept. She "listened" to the light and wind and grade of each area under study. The gardens grew naturally from one another until now, in their luxuriant spring growth, as in the winter when leafless branches show each degree of distance and the naked masonry (from brick and limestone near the house, through brick and gray stone in the rose garden, towards stone only in the fountain terrace, and finally to the stone and wood leading to the apple orchard), there is a special quality of charming restfulness recognized by thousands of yearly visitors.

There is a touch of whimsy here, an arresting breadth of scale there; and yet there are details so unobtrusive that they have to be looked "at" to be seen.

Thus, Dumbarton Oaks has its own personality sculptured from Beatrix Jones's knowledge and wisdom and from the daydreams and vision of the owners. The bonds of friendship and affection were firm and the guiding "anima" of Beatrix Farrand will linger in all the highlights and shadows. One's constant effort will be to make the future of the Dumbarton Oaks gardens worthy of their birthright.

